



Stimulus money will help Kansas Guard02



Joint State Conference held in Topeka07



MPs relieved stress at Mo's Gym11

PLAINS GUARDIAN

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Resiliency Program teaches skills to cope with stress

**By Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

One of the worst enemies afflicting the men and women of the National Guard won't be found on the battlefield. Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen are increasingly confronted with an enemy with no specific form or fighting style. It's called stress and, left untreated, can pose a severe threat long after a Soldier returns home from a deployment.

"The sad truth is, at one point in time we had as many Soldiers take their own lives as we had killed in action," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general of Kansas. "We began to realize that the reintegration and some of the hard knocks of life are just more than some people can bear."

Stress and mental welfare have become high profile concerns among the military community. Many programs, such as the Army's Battle Mind, the Air Force's Landing Gear and the Marine's Combat Operations Stress Control, have already paved the way in combating some of the psychological and mental stressors that accompany deployments. However, few of these programs have accurately captured the functions necessary to cater to the men and women serving in reserve components.

To answer this call, the Kansas Adjutant General's Department recently unveiled the Resiliency Center, a new training program designed to further strengthen Guard members and their families to better handle life's challenges.

"We went around and looked for programs that we could emulate for pre-deployment training," said Maj. Paul Gonzales, a program manager for the Resiliency Center. "Everything we've come across either pertains specifically to de-

ployment or post-deployment. Nobody prepares you to be hardy at the very beginning. There's no program out there, that we know of, that deals in the pre-deployment programs."

The concept behind the Resiliency Center is to better prepare Soldiers, Airmen and eventually all disaster responders, for the challenges of a deployment or crisis situation, well before they leave the comfort of home. The program will ensure both they and their families have all the tools necessary to better manage stress as it arises.

"As a commander, it began to seem like we pretty much waited for people to break and then would go and treat them. Had anybody thought about a preventive program or a way to make people a little bit stronger so perhaps they won't break?" said Bunting.

Currently the program is designed to do just that. For instance, one portion of the course is aimed at helping first line leaders better identify mental stressors in their troops. With the ability to accurately recognize and understand the many aspects of stress, leaders can guide their Soldiers to increase their adaptability, their strength and their ability to actually thrive and cope under adverse circumstances.

"There's no course out there like this, not even in active duty," said Gonzales. "The Kansas National Guard is leaning forward with this type of training."

Resiliency Center Program Managers Gonzales and Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Rodina have both experienced the psychological stresses of deployment first-hand and observed it in the troops they served with and lead. This has helped them shape the program.

"In Iraq, my unit suffered the loss of two

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Maj. Allen Mellen, New Jersey National Guard, constructs a cat out of clay using verbal guidance from Tech. Sgt. Jamie Evertt, Pennsylvania National Guard, as part of a Resiliency Center training exercise. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Traynor, Public Affairs Office)

Resiliency Program considers Israeli approach

**By Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

Along with researching resiliency programs within our own borders, the Kansas National Guard began looking abroad to find different methods being used to combat stress internationally.

"I think your missions are becoming very close to ours," said Col. Eyal Fruchter the head of the Israeli Air Force Psychology Branch. "So we came here to help prepare your National Guard commanders to look after their Soldiers in the field of primary prevention."

Fruchter was invited to Kansas to introduce members of the 1-6 Agri-Business Development Team, recently deployed to Afghanistan, to a class the Israelis call "Stress Inoculation." The idea behind this class is to educate unit commanders on how to properly identify signs of stress as well as potential causes of stress before they become entangled and potentially dangerous. As Fruchter points out, preparation and planning are perhaps the biggest keys in winning a war against stress.

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134th Air Control Squadron returns from Iraq

**By Capt. Deborah Balentine
184th Intelligence Wing Public Affairs**

Approximately 60 Kansas Air National Guardsmen of the 134th Air Control Squadron, 184th Intelligence Wing, Wichita, were welcomed home from their five-month deployment to Iraq during a ceremony at McConnell Air Force Base on May 22.

Escorted by American Legion Riders, buses carried the Airmen from the plane to the 184th Intelligence Wing's "Jayhawk Roost" Dining Facility. There the street outside was lined with more ALR motorcycles and over 150 family members and friends. Cheers filled the air as the 134th members stepped off the buses.

In attendance to welcome the troops back were the Adjutant General of Kansas, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting and the 184th Intelligence Wing Commander, Col. Mike Foster.

"I'm honored to have these Airmen in the Kansas National Guard," said Bunting. "They have served their country well and it's great to have them home for this important holiday weekend."

"It is great to have our Wing members back in Kansas," said Foster. "I am proud of their commitment to faithfully serve our country and thankful for their families, friends' and employers' continued support."

While in Iraq, the 134th ACS provided tactical support of air operations planning from the Control Response Center at Joint Base Balad. In that capacity they were re-

sponsible for controlling all flight traffic into the theater of operation, and played a key role in keeping the skies secure during the 2009 Iraqi provincial elections.



When daddy comes home, all is right with the world. Tech. Sgt. Justin Moody greets his family after coming home with the 134th Air Control Squadron. (Photo by Capt. Deborah Balentine)

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Stimulus money will help Kansas Guard complete armory projects

By Lt. Col. Rick Peat
Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas
Federal economic stimulus money will benefit National Guard communities across Kansas. Fourteen projects are scheduled in the coming months at National Guard facilities in Fort Riley, Hays, Kansas City, Manhattan, Salina and Topeka.

The money comes from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, an effort to jumpstart the economy, create and save jobs and build a foundation for long-term economic growth.

The stimulus package totals about \$787 billion, with the Kansas National Guard scheduled to receive almost \$6.1 million. “Improvements in our National Guard infrastructure will result in improved readiness to meet the national security challenges of the 21st century,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, Kansas adjutant general. “Ongoing energy savings from these projects will also mean that our contribution to national security will come at a lower cost to the American taxpayer.”

According to Lt. Col. Eric Blankenship, Planning and Programming manager with the Directorate of Facilities Engineering, Kansas’ projects were selected by National Guard Bureau for funding because they were related to reducing energy costs of our facilities and because they were already requested, certified and approved projects waiting for funding. The projects include:
Fort Riley - \$740,000 to construct a new building for the National Guard’s Camp Funston Training Area headquarters. The current buildings were constructed in 1941 and are energy inefficient and deteriorating.
Topeka - \$4.7 million for improvements

“Improvements in our National Guard infrastructure will result in improved readiness to meet the national security challenges of the 21st century.”
Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting

to five Army Guard aviation hangars and to the 190th Air Refueling Wing fire station. The hangar projects include replacing 38-year-old heating and air conditioning systems, upgrading lighting systems and renovating bathrooms that are in very poor condition. One 16,600 square foot hangar will get a new epoxy/urethane floor system with appropriate hangar striping and other markings.

Lt. Col. Mark Green, 190th Air Refueling Wing Civil Engineer, said the fire station project will provide almost 5,000 square feet of additional space which will enhance training, vehicle storage and provide living quarters for the 190th ARW Fire Department’s 24 hour operations.

Hays, Kansas City, Manhattan, Topeka - Approximately \$225,000 for upgrades to more efficient lighting systems in armories and maintenance bays.

“All of these construction projects will be contracted out to Kansas companies,” said Col. Clifford Silsby, director of Facilities Engineering. “While the majority of these projects range from \$18,000 to \$140,000, they improve our facilities and provide local economic benefits in communities across the State.”



A leaking, rust-coated valve and stained ceiling tile are just two bits of evidence indicating the need for a variety of repairs and renovations at many of the state armories, improvements that will be partly funded by money from 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. (Photo by Lt. Col. Rick Peat)

Military, private sector explore uses for unmanned aerial vehicles

By Pfc. Jessica Zullig,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
The Kansas Adjutant General’s Department, in cooperation with a number of public and private sponsors, hosted the 3rd Annual Unmanned Aerial Systems Symposium April 20-21, 2009, in Wichita, Kan. The symposium showcased new technologies and programs being used by Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

“Getting people together that can bring to bear a better situational awareness so the we can respond and recover faster from the challenges that life throws at us, most typically Mother Nature,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general.

Unmanned aerial vehicles are rapidly becoming a viable resource for the military and other emergency management applications. Keynote speakers discussed potential uses for emergency response and how the state of Kansas could benefit heavily from these systems.

“We’re working with the Guard on that because this is the future for commercialization and use of unmanned aerial vehicles in a private sector,” said Tim Rogers, executive director of the Salina Airport Authority.

The symposium offered a unique, collaborative meeting for professionals to see what’s on the cutting edge of the technologies and to generate new ideas for future

“If there was only one application that we’re all but begging to have capacity for with the UAV, it’s search and rescue.”
Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting

applications.
“...If there was only one application that we’re all but begging to have capacity for with the UAV, it’s search and rescue,” said Bunting.
Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins shared Bunting’s enthusiasm about the UAV.
“It’s critical that the Federal Government be equipped with the proper tools, technology and training to protect our people,” said Jenkins.
Participants were also invited to view UAV demonstrations at the Smoky Hills Weapons Range in Salina.
“It’s great to have the adjutant general out here and see what’s been worked on to bring the civilian emergency responders and the National Guard closer to operating smoothly together,” said Capt. Eric Pippin, commander of the Air Support Unit throughout the state for the Kansas Highway Patrol.

Kansas Soldier takes recovery journey to Oprah Winfrey show

By Staff Sgt. Tim Traynor
Public Affairs Office
Kansas National Guard Soldier Sgt. Allen Hill, 41, from Ottawa, Kan., appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show Friday, May 15, highlighting his participation in the Puppies Behind Bars program.
Hill was injured when he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 731st Transportation Company as a combat engineer, providing engineer support for armored vehicles. His situation serves as an example of recovery efforts for service members injured in combat overseas.
Injured by an improvised explosive device while on patrol in Iraq, Hill returned home with lasting invisible injuries. The explosion left Hill with a traumatic brain injury and he now suffers from post traumatic stress disorder.
But Hill is not alone in his recuperation. He now has “Frankie” by his side to help alleviate some of the side effects and foster restoration. Frankie is a yellow Labrador retriever service dog serving as a recovery companion.



Sgt. Allen Hill and Frankie (Photo provided)

Frankie was trained by Puppies Behind Bars, an organization which trains inmates to raise puppies to become service dogs for the disabled and explosive detection canines for law enforcement.
Hill was nominated by PBB to represent their efforts after visiting the inmate in New York who trained Frankie.
“Getting to see the work and love the inmates pour into these animals, and then give them up is amazing,” said Hill. “That in itself was a huge tear-jerking moment.”
As Hill and his wife rolled up to the prison, Frankie perked up a bit, waiting for the car door to open. Frankie knew where she was and forged ahead as soon as she hopped from the car.
While the meeting served as a reunion for Frankie and her trainer, Hill also hoped it would provide some closure. He



Up, up and away! An unmanned aerial vehicle is launched from a catapult during a demonstration at Smoky Hill Weapons Range. (Photo by Pfc. Jessica Zullig, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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Kansas House Bill creates Vietnam War Medallion



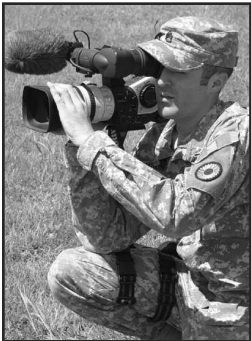
Committee on HB 2171 - Veterans; Vietnam War Medallion program. The bill creates within the Kansas Commission on Veterans’ Affairs a “Vietnam War Medallion, Medal and a Certificate of Appreciation” for every veteran who honorably served on active duty in the United States military service at any time beginning Feb. 28, 1961, and ending May 7, 1975. Any veteran who is entitled, or if the veteran died prior to making application, any spouse or the eldest living survivor of a deceased veteran would be entitled to apply. It also creates a “Vietnam War Veterans’ Recognition Award Fund,” which will consist of gifts, donation and bequests to the fund. Subject to federal restrictions, the KCVA shall transfer money in the “Veterans’ Cemeteries Federal Construction Grant Fund” to the “Vietnam War Veterans’ Recognition Award Fund.” (Photo provided)

Guardisman wins media awards

**By Pfc. Scott Shetley
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, a member of the 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, was awarded second and third place in two categories in the 2008 National Guard Media Contest.

“The contest recognizes the best and brightest in the Guard’s public affairs career field that includes well over 1,000 Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen from 54 states and territories,” said Jack Harrison, director of National Guard Bureau Public Affairs and Strategic Communication, The contest has been running for more



**Staff Sgt.
Mark Hanson**

than 30 years and has produced many Thomas Jefferson Award winners, the highest award given to a DoD public affairs practitioner.

The media contest has several categories for every aspect of the Public Affairs corps member to participate in and receive awards for their efforts. Hanson entered two video stories in the contest and placed in both categories.

In Category I: Television Information Program, Hanson placed third with his Kansas National Guard Museum Hall of Fame inductee video “Col. Paul A. Cannady.”

Hanson also placed second in the Category M: Television Feature Report, with his video piece entitled “Chapman Security.”

The Media Contest Web site reported that more than 40 individuals from more than 10 states entered in excess of 60 entries and that a panel of judges viewed each video and then awarded the winners.

Chaplain’s tale contains a word of warning for all

**By Staff Sgt. Tim Traynor
Public Affairs Office**

Imagine the surprise it must have been when a Soldier found out his medical insurance had been cancelled without warning. State Chaplain (Col.) Don Davidson found out his Tricare Reserve Select insurance had been cancelled only by receiving medical bills claiming he had no coverage. The revelation led him on a three-month journey to get his insurance reinstated.

After finding out his Tricare Reserve Select insurance was cancelled without warning, Davidson began his first of several calls to Tricare representatives to find out what had happened. Because of a series of events, Davidson’s payment never made it to Tricare, but he didn’t know it.

“Even though I had to call multiple times I never had to wait more than 10 minutes,” said Davidson. “You got the impression everyone was overworked and didn’t have a lot of time, but they were respectful and made a real effort to be kind.”

Sgt. Max Joye, Tricare Reserve Select Manager for the Kansas National Guard, also helped Davidson navigate through the automated phone system. In this case, where a dispute claim had been estab-

lished, Joye suggested Davidson ask for a supervisor when he called the hotline.

The process of reinstating benefits takes time and may require upper-level employees to push certain cases, as reinstatements are done on a case-by-case basis. Each case review begins at the local level and then goes to the regional office. Davidson’s information took three weeks to be processed through the regional office and then another 10 days for his policy to be reinstated.

However, Davidson is not upset with TRS for his drop in coverage.

“I still recommend the TRS to anyone. There’s no question about that,” he said.

With rates of \$47.51 a month for single members and \$180.71 for family plans, it’s easy to see why the coverage is attractive for National Guard and Reserve members.

“This is probably the single-best option for healthcare for Guard members,” said Joye.

However, Joye and Davidson caution Soldiers and Airmen to not miss payments. Though each situation can be addressed individually, missing a payment carries a one-year suspension of benefits. And just as in Davidson’s case, when members are able to get their coverage reinstated, it still takes time and hard work.

Learning to be Diversity Champions

**By Senior Master Sgt. Chuck Gruver and
Staff Sgt. Emily F. Alley
190th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs**

Today’s Air National Guard is comprised of our community’s finest men and women. Young Americans from all walks of life – rural farms, inner cities and every place in between –are drawn to the call of integrity, service and excellence. We celebrate this diversity, recognizing that such a mix of experience leads to a breadth of perspective and broader horizons, and ultimately innovative ways to maximize our combat capabilities for the joint team.

With that in mind, several members of the 190th Air Refueling Wing recently participated in a Diversity Champions workshop.

“Through communication, we can build efficiency,” Senior Airman Olivia Kennedy, a workshop participant, described. “For example, our mission is aerial refueling. But it comes down to the people and how they deal with each other on a day-to-day basis. You have to be self-aware. How do you handle yourself, and how does that influence others?”

Kennedy said she was initially skeptical when “some showed up defensive, like ‘Do they think I’m a racist?’” but later found the lessons practical.

The workshop explored communication, ranging from age, rank, gender and a breadth of other ideas. As a theme, participants did not wear uniforms and came from various backgrounds, including Joint Force Headquarters, traditional Guards-

men, full-time and even Army.

“When you acknowledge other people, it identifies the stereotypes you have,” said Capt. Bret Ulrich, who also participated. “It gives you tools to identify your fears.”

The projects were hands-on and reinforced a variety of communication styles. Kennedy said it was useful to illustrate why people react differently. She suggested it was a lesson she could apply to her personal life as well, specifically, understanding and talking to her husband.

“I’m learning how to decode him,” she said. “So if I approach him one way, maybe he’ll fix the roof, for example.”

Class participants explored a variety of communication styles.

“That knowledge isn’t meant to stop at one person,” said Kennedy. “You have to train the trainer and look for someone who can branch that information out. How do you help people around you be better?”

The workshop underscored the idea that a leader must motivate a variety of people, who may react differently to leadership style. A leader’s ability to form a complementary, winning team happens as the leader gets to know individuals and engages their full potential toward the goals of the team. The point is to find peoples’ unique talents and distill that into their highest contribution that they are passionate to give.

“Some of us, who have been in for a while, know about diversity issues,” said Ulrich. “But we recognize what a great unit this is.”



Participants in a Diversity Champions workshop assist Staff Sgt. Ashley Hastings through the “spider web,” an exercise designed to build teamwork. (Photo submitted)

Resiliency Center program

Continued from Page 1

Soldiers just a short time before we were to return home,” Gonzales said. “As a commander, I had to assess the needs of my troops and deal with the losses myself. This experience helped me better understand what our Soldiers and Airmen need in a training program prior to deployment.”

“As a Vietnam veteran, I saw the effects of war up close, but back then there was an even greater stigma attached with getting help,” Rodina said. “Fortunately, I did seek out the support I needed and now I’m honored to have helped develop a program that will encourage others to get the help they need.”

The training has been carefully constructed by mental health clinicians in the U.S. who have worked with Kansas National Guard members following their deployments.

“We’re excited to bring this new training program to our Guardsmen and, eventually, to our disaster responders,” said Dr. Rick Selig, director of Psychological Health for the Resiliency Center. “We want to give them the best possible information, tools and support to do the difficult job they have before them.”

Selig, has spent many years working with veterans and mental health issues, and has been closely assisting in the development of the program.

“We’ve collaborated with Walter Reed Army Institute of Research,” said Selig. “We’ve collaborated with the National Defense University, with the Israelis, who have pioneered work with stress inoculation. We’re also currently working with Kansas State University in terms of developing family resiliency programs. We want to make sure we get input from all angles to make this program as beneficial as possible.”

The course incorporates training developed by Israeli military for their own troops, as well as training designed by NATO officials. Another unique feature of the Resiliency Center is a Web site featuring military members and resiliency issues, allowing Soldiers to present information to the site for review and posting.

The Resiliency Center training will be provided to the National Guard in six other states this year.

“The impetus of the program is based on the resilient people of Kansas who have endured historic challenges ranging from the dust bowl of the 1930s to the Greensburg tornado, massive flooding and ice storms, all in 2007,” Bunting said. “Through the tough times, we’ve seen how strong Kansans are and how resilient they are despite incredible destruction and loss. We will build upon those qualities in this program and provide resources to make the tough times more manageable.”

Flu, budget cuts may impact us all, so be prepared

By Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting
The Adjutant General

Get ready for two big challenges ahead: pandemic flu and more economic shortfalls.

No matter how much we try to think positive, it’s critical we consider the possibility that sometimes things go awry, especially in the business of emergency management and the National Guard. Our ability to think the worst may happen and plan for that is exactly what saves lives.

That’s why we’re watching very closely the developments of the H1N1 flu virus and revisiting our plans to ensure we, as an agency, are prepared for the challenges this coming fall may bring.

Some scientists believe that H1N1 is following the same patterns as the 1918 pandemic flu and the Spanish flu strain of the 1960s. These occurred first during the spring, then diminished during the summer and spiked the next fall. H1N1 seems to be progressing faster in some ways than the 1918 virus leading some experts to conclude the U.S. could be hardest hit by October or November.

Now, more than ever before, it’s essential that you individually prepare for H1N1 at home and ask yourself and your family some of the following critical questions:

What if, within just a few months, the



Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting

number of individuals getting sick from the flu results in store shelves lacking the essentials you rely on like food, bottled water and medicines? Do you have an emergency kit with these items ready to sustain you and your family?

What if it’s necessary for you to stay home for several days and minimize contact with others? Do you have a family plan of action for ensuring what you need to do gets done including plans for child care, pet care and other daily needs?

Are you doing what’s necessary now to be healthy and keep your family healthy?

If you’re not, now is the time to start, while there is still time.

What if you can’t perform your job due to illness? Are others trained to do everything essential that you do to keep the business or organization alive during your absence?

What other aspects of your life do you need to take steps now for the possibility of major interruptions due to you or others being sick?

Pandemic flu could also impact our economy as well. Do you have access to cash for emergencies in case your bank isn’t open due to sickness or in case computer systems fail due to sickness of too many of those who do the repairs?

Please take a moment to go to www.pan-flu.gov and review how to prepare.

You’re probably familiar with the phrase, ‘failing to prepare is preparing to fail.’ With pandemic flu we simply cannot afford to not prepare...especially now when we have time to do so.

Another area we are working diligently on is our budget, given the ongoing chal-

lenges our state and nation faces with our economic status. Recently the Adjutant General’s Department along with other state agencies had to reduce their budgets and we are looking at additional areas where we may have to reduce spending. We are committed to protecting jobs as long as possible and will look at other areas to reduce our budget. Given the budget situation, it’s important we all look for ways to cut spending where practical, especially given the fact that significant economic improvements may take some time.

Another factor that impacts our difficult financial picture is severe storms. We’ve had two storm disasters this spring. Fortunately, the state recently received approval for federal assistance to defray costs associated with the severe winter storms that struck Kansas the last week of March and the severe storms, flooding, straight-line winds and tornadoes that occurred in late April and early May. The federal assistance will provide 75 percent of the costs to repair infrastructure which greatly assists the local and state with its share of the costs. Unfortunately, having a number of significant storms throughout the year has the potential to wreak havoc on the state budget. It’s an area on which we must work closely with the legislature.

Recently, we welcomed home from Iraq approximately 60 Kansas Air National Guardsmen of the 134th Air Control Squadron, 184th Intelligence Wing, in Wichita. They served a five-month deployment and were responsible for controlling all flight traffic into the theater of operation, and even played a key role in keeping the skies secure during the 2009 Iraqi provincial elections. In the meantime, approximately 60 Kansas Army Guardsmen left for Afghanistan as part of the 1-6 Agribusiness Development Team. The team, called “Combat Farmers” are work-

ing closely with the Afghan people to assist them in enhancing their farming capabilities to ensure they have a chance for a more sustainable economy.

We continue to seek enduring missions like the ADT mission for the Kansas Guard which helps our Soldiers and Airmen to succeed. It allows us to have enough missions in the area to ensure continuity and consistency in transitions. We will soon send a second team to Afghanistan for a year to replace our initial team. A third Kansas team will follow them for 12 months for a total deployment time of three years there.

In July, approximately 425 Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery, will deploy to the Sinai Peninsula as part of a Multinational Force and Observers mission. The mission of the MFO is to supervise the implementation of the security provisions of the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace and employ their best efforts to prevent any violation of its terms.

The 2-130 FA was the first Kansas Army Guard unit to receive our Resiliency Center training before deploying. It’s designed to better prepare our troops for the challenges they face before, during and after deployments. In July, we will train Guard members from several more states and continue to make every effort to share this training with every Guard organization willing to take it. We believe it’s a vitally important initiative aimed at improving the well-being of many Soldiers.

Many exciting things are happening at our Great Plains Joint Training in Salina including a recent Vigilant Guard exercise at our Crisis City location. We will have much more on this in our next edition and currently have information posted on our Web site at www.kansas.gov/ksadjutant-general.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Soldier to Soldier Personal experience reinforces need to observe safety rules

By Command Sgt. Maj. Ed Boring

When I was given the task of writing something for the “Plains Guardian” it took me awhile to put something in writing that everyone could relate to. Because most people drive and we all see motorcycles traveling the roadways I thought this would be a good time to remind everyone motorcycles are out there. How many times have we been reminded with the weather starting to warm up that a lot of new motorcycle riders will be on the road? How many times have we been told not to become complacent while riding motorcycles? You need to wear all of your personal protection equipment. Watch out for the four-wheelers because they won’t see you. All of these items may be true however let me tell you another side of the story.



Command Sgt. Maj. Ed Boring

I was thinking of all of these and other things last November just before going on a short ride. A local group was having a toy run, so a short ride sounded good. I have been riding a motorcycle for almost 40 years and during this time I have never laid a bike down. Because the weather was in the low to mid 30s I at least had the proper gear to stay warm – chaps, leather coat, gloves, boots and helmet . The road wasn’t dry due to a light mist, but it didn’t seem to be slick.

I’ve always considered myself a fairly safe/defensive rider. I’m always alert to my surroundings. I’m always looking out for the other guy. I don’t think of myself as a young rider with the invulnerability and attitude that can get me in trouble. However, on the flip side I did see myself as an older more experienced person having the “I’m

not old/I’m still young/I can do anything anyone else can because I have experienced life,” and believe me I now know having this mindset is just as dangerous.

So what happened in November? As I was traveling on the highway and rounding a curve the unthinkable happened to me. I was traveling too fast, traveled onto the crown of the roadway and lost control of my Harley.

Things do not occur in slow motion, as some people would like you to believe. When the bike went down it slide to the shoulder of the road and then the floorboard caught the ground causing the bike to flip. I was thrown off and landed on my right shoulder in the ditch.

I knew as soon as I hit the ground that this wasn’t going to be one of my better days. I broke my right collarbone in four places, broke my left thumb and wrist and tore the ligaments in my left thumb. At the hospital, I had surgery on my hand and the broken bones were allowed to start healing.

I had to miss work for two weeks and the insurance payments alone exceeded \$12,000. I still can’t use the hand the proper way and I can’t sleep on my right side and this crash occurred six months ago. I keep thinking “At least I’m not dead.” Because I was wearing all of my personal protection equipment, I didn’t even have a scratch or cut.

What have I learned from this experience?

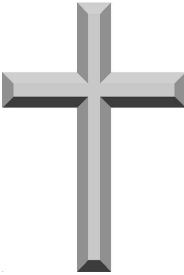
1. Wear your personal protection equipment. I really believe this kept me from having more serious injuries. It’s true I had broken bones, but at least I didn’t have any road rash. The pain from the broken bones was enough.
2. Don’t become complacent. Accidents can and will happen to the most experienced riders. As an older rider, be ready for anything.
3. Among all motor vehicles, motorcy-

(Continued on Page 5)

By Chaplain (Capt.) John Potter
Joint Support Chaplain

I had good noncommissioned officers who showed me the ropes, both as an enlisted Soldier and as an officer. The actions and examples that they demonstrated have stuck with me. They are the ones who got in my face, made on the spot corrections, demanded high standards, and emphasized the importance of planning ahead. They cared enough to confront me and others when they saw something out of place.

Suicide prevention needs to be viewed the same way. We need to be a “battle buddy” for those who are having a tough time. Hurting people need to hear honest concern from their friends, those who want



the best for them. We need to care enough to speak out when we see something wrong. When it comes to suicide prevention, remember ACE; Ask, Care, Escort.

ASK. Don’t be afraid to ask a friend, “Are you thinking about suicide?” when he or she is hurting. It is the best way to show your concern, especially if your friend is depressed or hurt. Sometimes they just need to talk. Making time to speak with a friend can save a life.

CARE. Listen to his or her story. Find out what the issue is for your friend. Common problems are relationships ending, stress from work, pending legal or disciplinary actions, and financial difficulties. Listen and watch for warning signs like: changes in sleeping or eating habits, increased alcohol usage, becoming isolated or withdrawn, feeling hopeless or depressed.

ESCORT. If you see or hear these warn-

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PLAINS GUARDIAN

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Ask the TAG



Does unclaimed property await you?

Is there any way to check and see if Soldiers and Airmen have unclaimed property they may have forgotten about during a deployment, such as accounts, wages or property?

The Guard lifestyle can be extremely busy as drill weekends, annual training days and deployments intertwine with daily lives. That in mind, it’s possible Guard members have unclaimed property that was lost in the shuffle – dormant checking and savings accounts, safe deposit boxes, wages and tax refunds that may have been forgotten or overlooked.

The Kansas State Treasurer makes simple work of the process for individuals researching if they have unclaimed property. First, a person must contact the Treasurer’s Office by phone (785)-296-4165 or 1-800-432-0386, Web

<http://www.kansascash.com>, e-mail unclaimed@treasurer.state.ks.us or mail at Kansas State Treasurer, Unclaimed Property Division, 900 SW Jackson, Suite 201, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1235.

The Treasurer’s Office will require the following items to verify a person’s identification:

- Social Security Number
- Address
- Notarized claim form, if the property is a safe deposit box, stock or worth more than \$500

** ** *

Send your question(s) by email to Tagquestions@us.army.mil or by mail to the Adjutant General’s Public Affairs Office, Att: Sharon Watson, 2722 S. Topeka Blvd., Room 108, Topeka KS 66611. Questions may be submitted anonymously.

Do you have what it takes to be command chief warrant officer

By Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Mark Jensen

I wanted to take this opportunity to announce that I will be retiring approximately a year from now and it is time to begin thinking about my replacement. To ensure someone has been selected and on board as the Command Chief Warrant Officer of Kansas on my departure, it will be important to initiate the selection process sometime this fall.



**Command Chief
Warrant Officer 5
Mark Jensen**

I would ask that any of you that are currently a Chief Warrant Officer 5 or in a position with time in grade to be promotable to Chief Warrant Officer 5 in August 2010 or sometime close to that time period, consider yourself a candidate for command chief. The position in Kansas is an Active Guard and Reserve position and any career field may apply.

The process is well defined in the Kansas standard operating procedures, but simply stated, a board will be convened to examine the files of those wishing to compete. This will result in a selection of two or three final

candidates. The names of those individuals will be submitted to the Adjutant General who will then select the new command chief or choose to conduct individual interviews in order to make a final selection.

I want to encourage each of you to dress up your personnel file and apply for this job. I’m available at any time to discuss the responsibilities of the position and what some of the expectations are. It is a valuable asset to the Adjutant General and significant in supporting the military education and promotion policies and programs for warrant officers in Kansas.

As the command chief, you may report directly to the adjutant general. You will also serve on the Warrant Officer Senior Advisory Committee at the national level and attend meetings with command chiefs from other states and regimental command chiefs from Active Duty.

I would suspect that the initial submission of files for the position will begin sometime around the November time frame to permit sufficient time for consideration and selection, with the chosen candidate attending the Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course in mid to late spring 2010 to permit promotion.

Please take the opportunity to test yourself for this position of great responsibility. I know we have some exceptional individuals who would be well suited to this job. Have a safe summer season.

Soldier to Soldier: Safety rules

Continued from Page 4

cles are the most vulnerable on the road. Because motorcycles do not have seatbelts, you can be thrown off your seat in a crash, which can cause serious injuries or even death.

4. “Drive to Survive.” Motorcycles are the smallest vehicles on the road. Unfortunately, they provide virtually no protection in a crash. Be aware of everything on the road and use caution and drive defensively.
5. Watch your speed. Of all vehicles, motorcycles accelerate the fastest and the bike can and will get away from you very quickly.
6. If a rider course is being offered in your area, take the course. If you have had the course before, take it again. Training is a good thing, but we need

to stay trained.

7. It takes longer for injuries to heal the older we become. It’s possible that some injuries will cause you to have to change what job you do.
8. Learn from your mistakes. I feel lucky to be alive to share my mistakes with you.

So the next time you are reminded that you should look out for the new riders, remember the experienced riders also need to be watched out for. Don’t become complacent and always be on the guard for the unexpected. Four-wheelers aren’t always the cause of accidents. A person on a motorcycle can cause accidents just as quickly.

Wear your protective gear; it won’t protect you if you don’t. As for me, I feel very lucky I was able to learn from this experience. Keep the shiny side up and ride safe.

Burke assumes command of 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery

**By Spc. Adam Cloyd
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

On April 26, 2009, Lt. Col. John D. Johnson relinquished command of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery Regiment to Lt. Col. Thomas Burke at the Custer Parade Field, Fort Riley.

Col. Michael Dittamo, commander 635th Regional Support Group, spoke during the change of command ceremony of the leadership shown by Johnson during his command. Dittamo expressed his appreciation to Johnson for a job well done and charged Burke with maintaining the high standards set by his predecessor.

Dittamo said that Johnson distinguished himself in several positions within the 161st Field Artillery, including commanding both Battery C and later Battery A, as well as battalion fire direction officer, fire support officer and training officer of 1st Battalion. Johnson most recently deployed and accompanied the battalion to Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in support of Joint Task Force 134 Detainee Operations.

Burke’s most recent assignments were the effects officer and liaison officer for the 35th Infantry Division. Burke deployed with the 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery to Iraq from September 2003 to February 2005.

Johnson was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his service prior to addressing the battalion for the last time as its



Lt. Col. John D. Johnson returns the battalion colors to Col. Michael Dittamo, signifying the relinquishing of command, during a ceremony on April 26. (Photo by Spc. Adam Cloyd)

commander. Johnson thanked the Soldiers of the 161st for their outstanding service during his command. His farewell remarks were short in keeping with the regimental motto “Faire Sans Dire” which means “To do without saying.”

184th Intelligence Wing wins Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

**By Maj. Deann Barr
184th Intelligence Wing**

The men and women of the 184th Intelligence Wing, Kansas Air National Guard, McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., have been awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for exceptional service from October 2006 to September 2008.

“This award recognizes the tenacity and mettle of the personnel of the 184th. The unit continues to represent the superb legacy of the Fighting Jayhawks. I couldn’t be prouder,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, Kansas Adjutant General.

During this period, the Wing provided outstanding support to the Global War on Terror by deploying more than 1,600 personnel in support of three major military operations. The ability to adapt to a joint force environment exemplified by this unit led to the development of more than 10,400 intelligence products derived from 12,120 hours

of full motion video, and included intelligence support on 101 directed combat actions in theater. These successes, all accomplished while undergoing a mandated conversion from a KC-135R equipped Air Refueling Wing to the first ever Intelligence Wing in the Air National Guard, only stand to underscore the extraordinary capability and flexibility of the Wing.

“This award is a testament to your collective perseverance, adaptability and innate ability to overcome adversity,” said Col. Michael Foster, 184th Intelligence Wing commander during a unit address. “It represents a tremendous amount of hard work and personal sacrifice for many of you as we’ve migrated into our new mission areas. Simply stated – you are an amazing team, and I can think of no other organization more deserving of such an honor. You have my utmost respect and admiration.”

Think Safety

101 Critical Days of Summer

**By Lt. Col. Eric Kerns
190th Air Refueling Wing Safety Office**

Summer is just here and many of us are day dreaming about our favorite warm weather activities -- vacation, picnics, camp-outs, boating, swimming, fishing and baseball. All of our summer plans can be great fun if we keep safety in mind.

The summer, unfortunately, is also a time when there is increased risk and more mishaps occur in three short months than during the rest of the year. For this reason, the Air Force recognizes the time from Memorial Day weekend through the Labor Day weekend as the “101 Critical Days.”

Some reasons for the increased risk is that we spend more time in outdoor activities and less time paying attention to the hazards. We may overextend our physical capabilities and fail to give our bodies time to rest. At times, we are thinking about our weekend or vacation plans, while we should be focusing on our work. Fatigue and inattention are factors in many mishaps. Alcohol abuse is another factor.

The number one cause of serious injuries and fatalities to Air Force members is motor vehicle mishaps. Many factors

are involved in these mishaps: driving when fatigued or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding, not using seat belts, and failing to recognize and react to road hazards.

People tend to head out of town for recreational activities without proper planning and preparation. We often travel on unfamiliar roads and drive too fast, without planning stopping points, and often don’t take time to prepare our vehicles for the trip.

The second leading cause of summer fatalities is from drowning. Boating, swimming, scuba diving and river rafting have cost many lives in the past. The number one water safety tip involves common sense – learn to swim.

Know your limits and don’t swim beyond your capabilities. Never swim alone and never dive into shallow water or water of unknown depth. Supervise children at all times around water, including backyard wading and swimming pools.

Preventing mishaps during this year’s 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign will depend largely on awareness of summer hazards and instituting smart operational risk management principles.

Business and Industry Forum explores ways to mitigate disaster

By Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson

105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Proper planning and coordination is essential to the successful outcome of any disaster. Such responsibilities are typically viewed as being the work of state agencies such as the Division of Emergency Management and Kansas Homeland Security. But when a disaster strikes, both public and private sectors must be able to effectively collaborate to respond and recover, minimizing their economic impact and returning to business as quickly as possible.

“If you try to come together at the time of the disaster it’s too late,” says Jack Taylor, Emporia Fire Chief and chairman for the Kansas Commission on Emergency Planning and Response. “You need to have formed those partnerships and to have planned and trained together and worked together.”

For two years, the Kansas Adjutant General's Department has hosted the Business and Industry Forum for Disaster Operations. This year's forum was held May 20 and 21 at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina, Kan., and highlighted the necessity for public and private interaction in the agriculture and agribusiness fields. Representatives from a variety of agricultural professions and members of various emergency management offices, met to discuss key issues concerning disaster response.

“I’ve got quite a background in livestock and livestock management,” said Jim Miller, the Montgomery County emergency manager. “And so I think the emphasis of today, focusing on the possibility of a livestock incident most certainly needed to be discussed...both industry and government need to be worried about the possibility of a livestock disaster.”

A large part of averting a crisis is by creating appropriate and responsive mitigation controls and functions.

“Agribusiness is a major player in the Kansas economy,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general and director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management. “Forums like this help the public and private sectors examine problems that arise from weather disasters, disease and other events and brainstorm on ways to prevent or mitigate losses.”

The purpose of the forum is to build a foundation for interaction between business and the emergency management community, including local, state and federal agencies.

"I think that we're too small as individual groups to handle things on our own and we need to have this partnership in order to be successful," stated Taylor.

Speakers for the forum included Bunting, George Teagarden, Kansas Livestock Commissioner; Maj. Dave Young, di-

A black and white photograph showing a group of people, including a man and a woman in the foreground, sitting at a long table and working on documents. The man is writing on a document, and the woman is looking at it. Other people are visible in the background, also working. There are laptops and a coffee cup on the table.

Business, industry and state leaders met to discuss ways to mitigate the effects of a large-scale disaster during the annual Business and Industry Forum, held May 20 and 21 at the Great Plains Joint Training Center in Salina. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

rector of the Integrated Initiatives Office,
Kansas National Guard and others.

“I think that all industries need this type of

training and I think it's way overdue," continued Taylor. "I think it's not a question of if we're going to need this training, it's when."

President approves federal disaster declarations for storms

President Barack Obama approved Governor Mark Parkinson's request for federal assistance to defray costs associated with the response and recovery activities during the severe winter storms that struck the state between March 26-29, 2009. The governor was also informed that the president approved a federal declaration for Public Assistance for damages resulting from severe storms, flooding, straight-line winds and tornadoes that occurred April 25 through May 16, 2009.

“On behalf of the State of Kansas, I want to express my gratitude to the President for approving these emergency resources,” said Parkinson. “After the storms hit, we had roads, bridges and power lines that needed significant repairs. Without this assistance, the local governments impacted by the storms would never have gotten

back on track.”

The first request for federal declaration was for actions taken by state and local emergency response agencies to the severe storms that blanketed large areas of the state with as much as 30 inches of snow, accompanied by strong winds, sleet, ice and drifts of up to 20 feet. The storms resulted in widespread power outages, road closures and some building collapses. Then-governor Kathleen Sebelius signed a State of Disaster Emergency declaration for 62 counties.

Preliminary Damage Assessments place damages in excess of \$12.8 million in the affected counties. The counties hardest hit were Butler, which sustained more than \$5 million in damages; Cowley, \$2.2 million; and Greenwood, \$1.9 million.

Parkinson requested federal Public Assistance (all categories of work including emer-

gency protective measures, debris removal and infrastructure repair) for 14 counties: Butler, Chase, Chautauqua, Coffey, Cowley, Dickinson, Elk, Grant, Greenwood, Harvey, Lyon, Marion, Sumner and Woodson Counties. He also requested emergency assistance in 19 counties for snow removal under the Public Assistance program (emergency protective measures). Those counties are Barber, Barton, Clark, Comanche, Edwards, Grant, Haskell, Kearney, Kingman, Kiowa, McPherson, Meade, Pratt, Reno, Rice, Seaward, Stafford, Stanton and Stevens Counties. In addition, he requested funding for the Hazard Mitigation Program statewide.

The second request was made June 11 for damages sustained in 28 counties (Anderson, Barber, Bourbon, Butler, Chase, Cherokee, Coffey, Cowley, Crawford, Elk, Finney, Greenwood, Harper, Harvey, King-

man, Labette, Linn, Lyon, Marion, Marshall, Montgomery, Morris, Neosho, Reno, Rice, Sumner, Wabaunsee and Wilson). This request also included the Hazard Mitigation Program statewide. Preliminary Damage Assessments for the flooding was in excess of \$13.1 million.

Neither request included Individual Assistance to citizens because damages to uninsured properties did not meet federal damage thresholds.

Public Assistance refers to money that is used to restore public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and utilities, and for associated recovery costs, such as debris removal from public roads. The Hazard Mitigation Program funds projects that are designed to eliminate or reduce the impact of disasters to a community, such as flood control measures.

State, county agencies take part in graded exercise for nuclear plant

The Adjutant General's Department joined a number of agencies from the state and Coffey County to take part in a graded exercise for the Wolf Creek Generating Station on June 3. Wolf Creek is located in Coffey County near Burlington.

The Kansas Division of Emergency Management, a division of the Adjutant General's Department, is the lead agency for coordinating all state response to emergencies in Kansas, if needed.

The exercise was graded by evaluators from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

At a public meeting on June 5, FEMA and NRC evaluators announced preliminary results of their evaluations and stated that all agencies and organizations involved passed their portion of the exercise.

Care Enough to Confront

Continued from Page 4

ing signs, then take your friend to a professional. No one expects you to have all the answers, but there are resources that you can recommend. Talking with a counselor or chaplain will alleviate much of the pain that service members have.

Recommended resources are:

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
- Military One Source, 1.800.342.9647
- Defense Center of Excellence Hotline, 1.866.966.1020

The exercise is a biennial requirement to determine the adequacy of the radiological emergency preparedness and response plans. The primary focus is on the ability of the state of Kansas, the utility and the participating county to protect the health and safety of the public living in the vicinity of the Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station. The evaluated exercise provides reasonable assurance that the appropriate protective measures can be taken onsite and off-site in the event of a radiological emergency.

The NRC is the federal agency responsible for evaluating onsite emergency plans and exercises for nuclear power plants. FEMA is responsible for evaluating offsite plans and exercises for states and counties through the Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program.

- Marriage and Family Life Counselors
Hotline, 1.888.755.9355

If you see a service member with a broken arm, you tell him or her to go to the hospital. Some wounds are not as easy to witness, but still require getting help. Care enough to stop and ask your fellow comrades how they are doing. Care enough to listen and find out what problems are present. Care enough to escort your buddy to a counselor or chaplain when times are tough.


The actions you take today, just might save a life.

KSNG

May Weather

May 01, 2009

History of Kansas Tornadoes



Tornadoes reported by month since 1950

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	20	229	529	1282	811	264	159	134	100	68	7

Tornadoes reported by hour of the day since 1950

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
35	20	26	17	6	10	5	3	7	7	15	35	68	126	203	313	433	567	532	508	283	159	118	80

The Data:

The Storm Events Database started tracking tornadoes in 1950, and meteorologists began adding hail and thunderstorm data five years later. By 1993, forecasters were tracking flooding, ice storms, heavy snowfalls and other extreme weather events. In recent years, forecasters have included narratives of many events.

The numbers show that Kansas ranks second to Texas in the number of tornado events since 1950, but 10th in the number of fatalities.

Among Kansas counties, Sedgwick County's 74 tornadoes ranks second only to Sherman County's 85 in the number of reported tornadoes.

In terms of fatalities, Butler County's 28 deaths ranks second only to Cowley County, which is where the May 25, 1955, Udall tornado killed 77 people.

The database shows that tornadoes have touched down in Kansas in every month, thanks to 2006. A Jan. 28, 2006, storm system produced two small tornadoes in northern Kansas and spawned a landspout tornado near Newton that shattered windows on at least 100 cars at an auto dealership.


Each tornado in the database includes a Fujita Scale ranking of 0 to 5, with 5 being the most destructive and having winds of up to 318 mph, enough to tear a house off its foundation and carry it away. In February 2007, forecasters adopted the Enhanced Fujita Scale, which modified the way tornadoes are rated but continued to rank them on a 0 to 5 scale.

Since 1950, there have been only six F5 tornadoes in Kansas, the latest being the EF-5 storm in Greensburg. Because such storms typically cross county lines, there are more than six F5 entries in the storm events database.

Source: The Wichita Eagle (Reach Hurst Laviana)

A summary:

- F5, winds up to 260 mph: 59 events that caused 49 deaths, 725 injuries and \$409 million in property damage
- F3, winds up to 206 mph: 197 events that caused 20 deaths, 508 injuries and \$671 million in property damage
- F2, winds up to 157 mph: 456 events that caused 40 deaths, 262 injuries and \$260 million in property damage
- F1, winds up to 112 mph: 821 events that caused 20 deaths, 95 injuries and \$95 million in property damage. Most of those deaths occurred on June 17, 1978, when a tornado capsized the Whippoorwill showboat on Lake Pomona in Osage County, drowning 16 of its 58 passengers.



Dave Williams/ file photo
An F-5 tornado was photographed as it destroyed parts of Hesston, Kansas March 13, 1990.

Where Tornadoes Killed

A study of tornado fatalities over the past decade show nearly half of the 631 people killed were in mobile homes:

Structure	Fatalities	% of total
Mobile homes	312	49
Houses	208	33
Vehicles	48	8
Buildings	37	6
Outside	26	4

Source: NOAA Storm Prediction Center

Kansas' Costliest Weather Events

Since 1950, severe weather in Kansas has been blamed for more than 300 deaths and more than 3,000 injuries, while causing more than \$4 billion in property damage. Here are some of the most common event types:

Storm Types	Damage	Injuries	Deaths
Tornadoes	\$715,218,000	446	30
Hail	\$489,805,000	19	0
Flooding	\$442,539,000	22	17
Winter storms	\$208,841,000	134	52
Lightning	\$19,656,100	25	6
Extreme heat	\$0	17	12

Source: National Climatic Data Center

Soldiers, Airmen and families hold annual Joint Conference

By Michele Henry, executive director, National Guard Association of Kansas

The 56th Annual State Joint Conference held at the Ramada Inn in Topeka April 17-19, was a tremendous success this year. It was attended by vendors, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve representatives, Family Support representatives, Kansas National Guard officers and enlisted personnel and their families.

Friday activities kicked off the conference with a successful clay pigeon shoot competition and an annual golf tournament. That evening, the opening ceremony featured Kansas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting speaking and sharing his view of the importance of a joint conference. The evening’s entertainment included more

than 75 exhibit tables and entertainment from the band BaliRoot.

The weekend was filled with many great speakers, including author Dr. Vance Hardisty; Mayor of Greensburg, Bob Dixon; and informative reports from all Kansas major commands and wings. Saturday evening was filled with many well-deserved award presentations and the entertainment was complete with the 35th Army Rock Band’s standard excellence in performance.

Sunday morning featured a prayer gathering and a Family Support Breakfast where awards were presented to honor those family members that had donated much of their time and efforts in support of the Kansas Family Support activities.

Competition, camaraderie the hallmarks of 2009 Sporting Clays shoot

**By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

The team members wait for the target, silent and motionless, guns at the ready. Suddenly someone yells a warning. “Eleven o’clock high, two o’clock high!” The team of four shooters move in unison to adjust their weapons to the various zones, each having been assigned their sector of fire before the event then, the rapid shooting began. Deadly blasts of gunfire erupt, destroying the two targets. Everyone sighs a breath of relief and the members begin discussing how to shoot better the next time as they ready their weapons for another mission.

Is this in Iraq or Afghanistan? No, it was the 2009 Spring Clays shoot out, held April 17, 2009, at the Ravenwood Lodge in Topeka, Kan. The event was sponsored by the National Guard Association of Kansas, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and the Family Readiness Group. The event was hosted by the Kansas Joint Force Headquarters, Kansas National Guard.

The shoot-out is an annual event that helps kick off the annual National Guard Association convention and Kansas’s Professional Development Program on the weekend.

“This shoot-out helps with team building and promotes esprit de corps,” said event manager, Lt. Col. Les Gellhaus. “Plus, it’s a lot of fun to compete with your comrades and buddies and it really, really hones your shooting skills. It gives you something fun to do before all the meetings and seminars coming up on the weekend.”

Teams were made up of Army and Air Guard members, civilians, men and women and some youth. Each shooter had 50 shotgun shells to shoot at 50 regular sized clay pigeons, and if they were good enough to down two clay pigeons with a single shot, then they got to take any left-over shells to the team competition.

The individual shooting was scored simply. Each target hit was a point. But, on team shooting, there were a couple of twists. First, the pigeons were competition-sized, meaning that they were much smaller than a regular sized clay pigeon. Each target hit was scored as five points and on each launching, there was a red clay pigeon, which was considered the “poison target.” If someone on the team hit that, it was a deduction of 25 points. There was also a deduction of a point per clay pigeon missed.

The teams learned that shooting the sports clay pigeons takes more skill than regular clay pigeon shooting.

“Those things really fly fast,” said Luke Hannan, the youngest shooter, who is the son of Col. Larry and Laura Hannan.

“They’re harder to get a good bead on,” said Staff Sgt. Justin Lawson, “but if you can hit those, then you’ve matured into a really good shot.”

“The team shooting is about strategy,” explained Gellhaus. “Let’s say that my team arrived at the team shoot with six shells left over from the individual shoot, we make sure that the best shooter has the most shells to shoot, but still, get everyone to cover down with at least a shell or two, depending on his skill level. Of course, the more shells you arrive with, the better your odds.”

There were 37 competitors this year. In the individual events, trophies went to the winners and the winners were: Top Youth Shooter (12-years-old was the minimum age, have a hunters safety card and their sponsor had to be present during shoot) was Luke Hannan with a score of 22, Top Female Shooter was Capt. Molly Gillock with 14. Both of these shooters beat the national average of 13 hits out of 50 targets.

Match Winner was Staff Sgt. Justin Lawson with 42 and 11 doubles. Second Place Individual was Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jack Hancock with 39 and seven doubles. Third Place Individual was Staff Sgt. Stan

(Continued on Page 10)



The opening night barbecue of the 56th Annual State Joint Conference was a good time to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. Col. Larry Hannan chats with Tim Ray of TriWest. (Photo by Pfc. Jessica Zullig, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Team Rose wins fourth tournament



Dedee Erlacher, putts a tough lay on hole #12 while (from left) Laurie Kuechler, Kathy Gretencord and Maj. Terresa Riedel watch. The team was the first all female team in the tournament history. (Photo by Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment**

For the fourth year in a row, Team Rose won the Annual National Guard Association Golf Tournament at the Shawnee Country Club in Topeka during the social events held before the Annual National Guard Association Conference on Friday, April 17, 2009.

The team was composed of Team Captain, retired Col. Joe Rose, retired Col. Henry Martin, Darrel and Randy Harris. They were the first place team in the first flight of the day, with a team score of 58 in the scramble event. Team member Martin commented how this year’s win compared with previous year’s wins.

“This was a very good win. There were many strong teams playing in the tournament,” said Martin. “Brad Mettner’s team was playing very well and that motivated us to play better. All of our team members were playing very good, the weather was perfect (last year’s weather was very cold and very windy) and we had a lot of fun.”

The toughest areas of the course were probably the par three holes. “We made some great putts to birdie several holes,” said Rose, “but the short par four up the hill number 16 is the place we won the tournament.” Team Rose birdied that hole, giving them a two stroke advantage to their closest competitor.

Team Rose’s strengths were hitting long drives and having two great putters on the team. Their weakness was getting too close to the green on par fours and sometime

their chipping was landing short.

“They’re a hard team to beat,” said Dedee Erlacher, a civilian player from Ottawa that played on the first all female-team in the tournament. Her team was sponsored by Maj. Terresa Riedel. “They didn’t have to take as many mulligans as other teams. I think they’re very familiar with this course.”

“Each of those team members are ringers,” laughs Brig. Gen. Deborah Rose, wife of Joe Rose. She had her own team in the tournament, but didn’t place. “Joe won’t even let me play on his team, he has to get his winning team together and win each time.”

How did the Team Rose’s strategies change from last year? They knew they needed to shoot 12-14 under par to win. They had been watching the identified good teams to determine how they were playing. They saw that most of the teams were playing very good and that motivated Team Rose to concentrate on each hole.

So what is Team Rose planning for next year’s challenge? The team members are keeping their plans close to their vests.

Martin did have this much to say. “Our strategy is to have our first hitter to play safe on the drives and hit the center of the greens on the approach. Then the next three players can go for it with their shots.”

“We will play next year as a team,” said Rose. “We enjoy playing with people we served with in the military. The association’s social events keep us connected to the Kansas National Guard after one re-

(Continued on Page 10)



Taking their quadrants, team members ready for the team competition during the 2009 Spring Clays shoot out. (Photo by Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Families tops in their support of Kansas National Guard

By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Two families were honored this year during the 2009 National Guard Association of Kansas annual conference’s banquet on April 18, 2009, at the Ramada Inn in Topeka. The top Kansas Army National Guard family was the Sgt. Jim Kristinat family of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, while the Kansas Air National Guard family honored as the top Family Volunteers of the Year was the William Mukes family of the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

The Kristinat Family

In defining what constitutes a great family, you need to look no further than the Kristinats. Jim, Janet, their family members, James, Nicole, Whitney and Autumn, are all faces the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation know quite well. They are dedicated, giving and supportive.

The Kristinats are a very busy family. Janet has served in the Family Readiness Group since Jim enlisted over 18 years ago. She is currently a company Family Readiness Group leader, the annual events coordinator and the fundraising chairperson. She works full-time for Security Benefit and finds time to work part-time with the National Hot Rod Association.

Jim is a full-time Black Hawk crew chief for the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation. Whitney is the youngest and a senior in

high school and is the Family Readiness Group Youth Assistant. James is the eldest child and recently finished his Army technical school and is now a member of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation. He and his fiancée, Nicole, are the proud parents of Autumn.

This family comes to every meeting, activity, conference and function for the unit and the state. Janet and Whitney are very active in the Family Readiness Group. Jim, James and Nicole are always helping the Family Readiness Group with whatever project they are working on at the moment.

As a family, the Kristinats volunteer every year at the United Way’s Walk for Life. They run the kids carnival, selling tickets, giving prizes and helping with the games. They enjoy giving this service.

The 1-108th’s annual carnival would not be the same without the help of the Kristinat family. They all make it their priority to make each year the best yet. Janet, Whitney and James all attend committee meetings, recruit volunteers, and search for the best deals. Jim drives all over to collect the items needed and helps set up the event. They work together with other volunteers to make it come together.

The Family Readiness Group has come to count on the support of this family. The unit knows that when called upon the Kristinats will do whatever needs done

with a smile on their faces and then they will add a touch more to make it better. There’s no hesitation, no complaints they just step up and give of themselves.

The Mukes Family

The Mukes family have been volunteers with the 190th Air Refueling Wing for over a year. They have accumulated 355 volunteer hours. Their family is a family that prefers to be on the giving end instead of receiving. This is evident in their intense involvement in the Family Readiness Group and their surrounding community. Their obvious dedication and enthusiasm is an example for all families and they have enriched the 190th Air Refueling Wing.

This family doesn’t just volunteer—they immerse themselves in the organization and strive to assist wherever needed. They have been involved in all Family Readiness Group activities and events. Master Sgt. Mukes is a volunteer for Strong Bonds, a family program that gives support to families in need, and has a master’s degree in Family and Marriage Counseling where he provides his expertise for 190th Air Refueling Wing families. In the past year he has assisted with two Strong Bonds events and assisted 50 couples.

Carla Mukes is the 190th Air Refueling Wing Family Readiness Group president and has attended the State and National

Volunteer conferences. While assuming her duties in the newly formed group, she bolstered the group to a new level. Bringing her talents from years as the president of her local PTA, she organized and developed a clear direction for the organization. In addition, Mukes was instrumental in the group’s recent case lot sale. Making numerous trips to Fort Leavenworth to coordinate the sale, where the group sold \$25,000 worth of food to unit members. She also drives the van for senior members of her church.

Master Sgt. and Mrs. Mukes have three children, all are volunteers in the Family Readiness Group, and they volunteer their time at a local nursing home and are heavily involved in Girl Scouts. Their daughter, Mia Mukes, was selected as the Youth Volunteer of the Year. The Mukes Family fully understands the needs and stresses of military families and they open themselves fully to members of the group. Their kindness and generosity does not stop at their doorstep but continues on into the community. They are deeply involved with their church, teaching bible study and providing day care. The Mukes family has become a recognized positive force of the 190th Air Refueling Wing while they’ve been become a portrait of the Volunteer Family of the Year.

Rueger named 2009 National Guard Association Spouse of the Year

By Spc. Adam Cloyd
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

According to the Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, the word “support” has six different definitions, including “to keep from fainting, yielding, or losing courage; to keep going.”

Deployed Soldiers often talk about the support they receive from loved ones back home, stories of small gestures – care packages, phone calls to a second cousin who was the only one up in the middle of the night, a photo of a new niece or nephew. Small gestures can mean the world to a service member when they are half-way around the globe.

Carrie Rueger was named the 2009 National Guard Association Spouse of the Year on April 19, at the National Guard Association of Kansas annual convention at the Ramada in Topeka. If you ask her or her husband, Lt. Col. John Rueger, she was nominated and awarded for the small gestures she makes to support Soldiers.

Rueger doesn’t head any committees with the Family Readiness Group, but she’s always there offering a smile, warm handshake and support, even if it means driving two hours to get there. She hasn’t spearheaded any new programs within her husbands’ battalion or the state, but she’s always at his side at functions supporting him, making the small gestures needed by Soldiers.

The demands of a young growing family are faced by countless Guard families. A child at home going through their terrible twos, a new baby on the way and a full time job is a story shared by many Guard families. This story is also Rueger’s. She teaches fourth grade in Shawnee Mission and has a new baby on the way that just happens to be due at the same time her husband is to deploy to Egypt. Yet she always makes time for the small gestures.

Rueger had a student last year whose dad was deployed to Afghanistan. She made sure to spend extra time with the child and talk to the mother a little more often. A small gesture, but one that can make all the difference to a child or a spouse at home trying to cope with a loved one away.

Rueger said that being involved with Family Readiness Group has helped her as much as she’s been able to help others. Being involved with other spouses makes her feel like she’s not in this alone, she said. To her, her gestures may seem small,



Carrie Rueger, with her husband Lt. Col. John Rueger, was named the 2009 National Guard Association Spouse of the Year. (Photo by Maj. Mike Wallace, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

but being there and listening is what is needed the most.

“She’s not dealing with anything more or less than any other spouse,” said Lt. Col. Rueger. The efforts Carrie Rueger is making are ones that any spouse can make, he said.

In modern military leadership classes the term “the soft side of leadership” is often used to describe the personal development side of leadership. Whether Carrie Rueger realizes it or not, her small gestures are the perfect example of the softer side of leadership. While she may not be standing in front of the spotlight, her small gestures make her a leader and deserving of being named the 2009 National Guard Association Spouse of the Year.

Cherie Herlinger, the coordinator of the Kansas Soldier and Family Assistance Center, says Rueger’s warm personality draws people into the Family Support Group.

“Wait till after the deployment,” said Herlinger. “I bet you there will be a million stories to tell (about Rueger).”

They will be stories of small gestures, phone calls answered in the middle of the night, words of encouragement or stories of nothing more than a friend’s willingness to listen.



The Kristinat family represented by Janet Kristinat and her daughter, Whitney, accepted the Top Army Volunteer Family of the Year award on behalf of their family. Janet is wife of Sgt. Jim Kristinat, a member of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Carla Mukes accepts the Top Air Force Volunteer Family of the Year award from Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting, the adjutant general. Her husband, Master Sgt. William Mukes, is a member of the 190th Air Refueling Wing. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Appenfeller, Henry receive Distinguished Service Medal

By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Appenfeller and Michele Henry were both awarded the Distinguished Service Medal by Kansas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting during the evening ceremonies at the 2009 National Guard Association Banquet, April 18, 2009, at the Ramada Inn in Topeka.

Under Appenfeller’s tenure as president of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kansas, the association has seen a tremendous growth in membership. He has personally recruited members and ensured those new members understood what their membership does for the association.

“Chief Master Sergeant Appenfeller is tireless and gives selfless service to both the Enlisted Association of the National Guard as well as the National Guard Association of Kansas,” said Bunting.

Appenfeller is active in legislative affairs and often escorts other enlisted association members to legislative visits.

Since starting as the executive director of the National Guard Association of Kansas, Mrs. Michele J. Henry has been accused of blazing a trail of action for the association.



Michele Henry (left) and Chief Master Sgt. Jeff Appenfeller were the recipients of the Distinguished Service Medal during the 2009 National Guard Association of Kansas banquet. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

“Her enthusiasm, drive and energy have given us a turbocharged approach to doing business,” said Lt. Col. John W. Rueger, NGAKS president. “Not only does she apply over 100 percent of her energy to our association, she has time to act as a single mom with a deployed husband while raising her two girls and fully participates with them in family activities, 4-H projects and school activities.”

Additionally, Henry serves on a number of boards and activities for the betterment of her community and the State of Kansas. She is a member of the Kansas Military Board, a Trustee of the Topeka-Shawnee County Library Board and chairs the Kansas National Guard Foundation. She spearheaded the recent successful campaign for Bunting as he was elected as the National Chairman of the National Guard Association.

Henry is also responsible for the success of the annual NGAKS Legislative visits to Capitol Hill, and acts as a member emeritus of each of the NGAKS committees. She is credited with assuring that NGAKS continues to be a 100 percent state in NGAUS membership, now for 20 consecutive years.



Employers honored by Kansas Guard

By Spc. Adam Cloyd
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
The National Guard Association of Kansas held its annual conference April 19 at the Ramada Inn in downtown Topeka. During the conference, the association discussed issues affecting Guardsmen and Reservists and presented several awards that had been earned throughout the year. Many of these awards were to civilian employers for their support of the Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard.

The Pro Patria award is the highest award given by an Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) state committee. It honors outstanding employers in each of three categories: Small Private Employer, Large Private Employer and Public Sector Employer.

The first company named was Johnson Controls, Inc. Kansas Systems of Lenexa was honored as Small Private Employer of the Year for the support that has been extended to Tech. Sgt. Thomas Wolkes, a member of the Air Force Reserve. The company pays salary differential and continues full benefits for family members during involuntary deployments. Branch manager Tom Moser accepted the award on behalf of the company.

Johnson County MED-ACT was honored next as Large Private Employer of the Year for their support of Lt. Henry Deters, a member of the U.S. Navy Reserve. Deters listed extraordinary benefits extended by the company in support of his numerous periods of training and his deployment. Battalion Chief Eric Gourley accepted the award on behalf of the company.

Twin Valley Telephone Company, Inc. of North Central Kansas was then honored as Public Sector Employer of the Year for their support of Sgt. David Jermark, of the Kansas Army National Guard. The company has always been extremely supportive of his continued enlistment in the Guard continuing full benefits to his family during active duty periods. Penny Gisselbeck accepted the award on behalf of the company.

Another high award for employers is the Above and Beyond Award. It honors employers who go above and beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. The following companies were honored with awards this year.

Bradken Americas Atchinson (formerly known as Atchison Casting Corporation) was honored for their support of Sgt. Michael Miller. Miller sustained wounds while deployed to Iraq. His supervisors have continued to assist him during his recovery and are holding his job until he is able to return to work.

Blue Valley Tele-Communications was honored for support extended to Sgt. David Ohlde, of the Kansas Army National Guard. Ohlde was deployed twice while employed at the company both times the company continued his salary and benefits.

Landoll Corp. was honored based on the support extended to Sgt. 1st Class Jerald Kracht, of the Kansas Army National Guard. Landoll supports their deployed employees by maintaining contact, continuing benefits and communicating with the member’s family. The company has 575

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Kansas Army and Air Guards select Volunteers of the Year



Mrs. Kay Scott (left) and Mrs. Brenda Bernard (right) receive Volunteer of the Year awards for their outstanding efforts on behalf of the Kansas National Guardsmen of the 184th Intelligence Wing and 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
Kay Scott of the 184th Intelligence Wing’s 134th Air Control Squadron and Brenda Bernard of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation were named as the 2009 National Guard Association Military Volunteers of the Year for the Kansas Air and Army National Guard, during the annual banquet held Saturday, April 18 at the Ramada Inn in Topeka.

Kay Scott earned her award for her six years as the Family Readiness volunteer. She began volunteering on an “as needed basis” and became more involved in unit and wing activities in the last year, such as Wing Safety Day, Wing Spa Day, Wing Kids Halloween party, Wing Christmas party, Operation Homefront, the Dollar Tree stores kids Christmas toy collection and unit pre-deployment briefings. Scott always attends the monthly FRG meetings.

“You can count on her to assist with any project, or when any family member is in need of assistance,” said Col. Mike Foster, wing commander. “She always has respect and patience with all individuals she comes in contact with. Mrs. Scott also encourages the family members of single deployers to be involved in the unit’s activities and events.”

“She reaches out to the parents of single military members and make the parents feel a part of the deployment,” said Col. Mike Tokarz, the unit commander. “She is passionate in helping others and goes the extra mile to make sure the family members within her unit are helped through any situation. Mrs. Scott often recalls how it was to be a new wife in the military and use the experience to help others through their own situations.”

“Brenda Bernard was the best choice for



the job—our Battalion has been blessed with many dedicated volunteers, so it is hard to pick just one,” said Lt. Col. David Leger, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation commander. “This past year was full of adjustments. Coming off of a recent deployment, we had several changes of command, from the battalion to almost all of our companies. The hardest volunteer position we currently have is as the Bravo Company FRG Leader.”

The command staff of the battalion says that Bernard is a truly outstanding woman. In addition to being the mother to three young boys, she is a Cub Scout den mother, a full-time registered nurse and a nurse manager in an oncology clinic.

When the need arose to find a leader for Salina-based Company B, Brenda was the unit’s first choice. She took on a huge responsibility when she agreed to volunteer her time because the company had been without a leader for a few months and had been reconstructed from the deployment. She started without any volunteers, but the battalion FRG leader encouraged her to shoot for the stars.

Bernard has held regular meetings in Salina. She held and organized a family picnic at the end of annual training last June for the 100 families in the company. She was able to get 85 percent to come and bring their families. Bernard collaborated with other FRG leaders to have a unit-wide outing to Rolling Hills Wildlife Park. She also planned and put on a Christmas event for the families and children of Company B.

Last August, the unit had a Soldier lose his home in a fire. Bernard immediately contacted the family, asked what they needed and made arrangements for them. She organized a clothing drive and a fundraiser. She went, as always, the extra mile.

Volunteers recognized at Family Support Awards Breakfast

By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
During the 2009 Kansas National Guard Family Awards Breakfast held Sunday morning, April 19 at the Ramada Inn in Topeka, volunteers were recognized that give their time for the Family Support Programs in the Kansas National Guard.

According to the Family Support Program, there are two state levels of awards. The top award was the Horizon Award, presented for a minimum of 500 hours of documented volunteer work in the Family Support Program.

Kay Scott of the 134th Air Control Squadron, 184th Intelligence Wing, was awarded a Horizon Award. Youth members that also earned the award were Zakary Anderson, Michael Schmidt, William Hamilton, Dusty Sawyer, Ally White, Rachel Blankenship and Tyler Shafer.

The next level of award is the Pioneer Award for 200-499 hours of documented volunteer work in the Family Support Pro-

gram. Tammy Edington, Janet and Whitney Kristinat, Shantal Nickel, Jennifer Boswell and Brenda Bernard, all members of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation earned the award. Other winners included Marie Delong, Dottie Westergren and Carla Mukes of the 190th Air Refueling Wing and Theresa Schmitt of the 287th Special Troops Battalion.

There are two levels of unit awards that were presented. The Frontier Award is the highest for anyone who has 51-199 documented hours of volunteer time to the Family Readiness Program.

Those awarded the Frontier Award were: Thursa Weier and Patti Phillips of the 184th Intelligence Wing; and Sara and Heidi Childs of the 635th Regional Support Command.

The next level is the Ad Astra per Aspera Award. This certificate is presented to anyone who had volunteered their time. Those that were presented this were Jarrod Delong, Sharon Halsig, Kimberly Abbey,

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Two earn Youth Volunteer of the Year Awards at NGAKS conference

By Pfc. Jessica Zullig and
Spc. Angie M. Mooneyham
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Dusty Sawyer, a student from Buhler High School, was awarded the Army Youth Volunteer of the Year Award at the National Guard Association of Kansas Joint Conference on April 18 and 19 at the Ramada in Topeka, Kan. Dusty is the son of Sgt. 1st Class David and Suzanne Viegra of the 1161st Forward Support Company in Hutchinson, Kan.

Sawyer has volunteered with the Kansas Army National Guard youth program for seven years. He has been a positive role model for all children of the Guard, not only volunteering within his own Family Readiness Group, but also at Operation Teen Camp and Operation Kids Camp.

Along with being a Teen Camp graduate, Sawyer advanced from participant to camp counselor and at Operation Kids Camp, he progressed from camper to the only teenage squad leader mentoring junior squad leaders.

Sawyer persevered under difficult circumstances by completing tasks that were requested of him by demonstrating great motivation to learn the position of squad leader and role model for the camp participants. Also, Sawyer demonstrated supervisory ability by leading and counseling 12 boys between the ages of 11 and 12 with little time to prepare for the task at hand.

Organized, efficient and competent are additional qualities that are associated with Sawyer. People who know him say his communication skills are above and beyond that of an average 17-year-old boy, adding that he attends every meeting and event with a smile on his face and never has a negative thing to say about anyone or anything he may be up against.

Through his desire, will and initiative Sawyer has made a great impact on all the National Guard Youth he has come into contact with. He has been such an outstanding volunteer he was selected to attend the National Guard Youth Symposium in 2007 and 2008 representing the state of Kansas. Sawyer's efforts and hard work has directly contributed to the success of the Kansas

National Guard Youth Program. Dusty holds a second degree black belt in Tang Soo Do. He is also a provisional instructor at the Jade Mountain Martial Arts. He has earned the Ad Astra Per Aspera award, been involved in the Young Marines in school, has been in high school track and cross country and has been on the honor roll all through high school.

Michael Schmidt, a Marais des Cygnes Valley High School senior from Melvern, Kan., was awarded the Air National Guard Youth of the Year award. Schmidt's mother is Tech. Sgt. Dorothy Westergren, who is a member of the 190th Air Refueling Wing in Topeka, Kan.

"Michael Schmidt has been a positive role model for all children of the Guard and what they must endure during a deployment," said Col. Derek Rogers, who nominated Schmidt for the award. "He is a level-headed youth and welcomes all new challenges. He has also progressed from participant to a counselor at Operation Teen Camp."

Schmidt has been a volunteer with the youth program for five years. He also volunteers at both Operation Teen Camp and Operation Kids Camp and has spent countless hours working with the Family Program Office at the 190th Air Refueling Wing helping with anything from office work to the day care.

He is an active student in his high school, serving as his class vice president, and is active in Future Farmers of America, Future Business Leaders of America and other organizations.

"Through his desire, will and initiative, he has made a great impact on all the National Guard youth he has come in contact with," said Rogers. "His efforts have directly contributed to the success of the Kansas National Guard Youth Program."

Schmidt is a member of his school's Scholars Bowl and attended the Robert Dole Institute at Kansas University last summer. He was nominated by the Kansas ROTC and selected to go to the Air Force Academy for a diversity seminar this year and has participated in the school's athletic programs throughout his high school career.



Michael Schmidt (left) and Dusty Sawyer received Youth Volunteer of the Year Awards at the 2009 National Guard Association Joint Conference in April. (Photo by Pfc. Jessica Zullig, 105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Employers honored by Kansas Guard

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employees with 10 being members of the Guard or Reserve. At one time, as many as seven Soldiers/Airmen were deployed at the same time.

Leawood Fire Department was honored based on their support of Capt. Joe Ostermann, of the Kansas Army National Guard. The department flew the Blue Star Flag for Ostermann during his deployment and supported his family in numerous ways and provided care packages and medical supplies in support of the deployed Americans.

Marysville Police Department has two of its eight officers serving in the Kansas Army National Guard. The support shown to these officers during Guard training and

deployments is unwavering. Munson Army Health Center was honored for its support because of its 380 employees, 12 employees serve as members of the Guard or Reserve. During deployment, the center continues insurance and benefits, and personnel from the medical center have shown their support for deployed Soldiers by assisting families, keeping in touch with deployed Soldiers and sending care packages.

Skaggs Hardware was honored for its support of Lt. Col. David Schmidt, of the U.S. Army Reserve. During Schmidt's almost 20 years with the family-owned business their support during training and mobilization has been above and beyond.

Wells is top Guard volunteer

By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Master Sgt. Tammy Wells of the 190th Air Refueling Wing (ARW) was named as the 2009 National Guard Association Military Volunteer of the Year at the annual banquet held Saturday, April 18 at the Ramada Inn in Topeka. The award is designed to show who in the Kansas National Guard has been the most committed to support Kansas Family Programs and the program's mission.



Master Sgt. Tammy Wells

Wells has volunteered for the 190th ARW for 11 years. This past year she has a total of 96 hours as volunteer and she is a member of the unit's Family Readiness Group. "Master Sergeant Wells is an excellent example of dedication and dependability," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. "She displays a high degree of in-

tegrity, responsibility, and ambition and she is definitely a leader rather than a follower." Wells contributed directly to the success of the 190th Air Refueling Wing's 2008 Friends and Family Day celebration. She organized more than 40 community volunteers in support of the unit's Family Day, thus ensuring all unit members were able to enjoy the events of the day with their families. With more than 1,500 people in attendance, Wells' dependability and judgment, coupled with her dedication, guaranteed the success of the event and exceeded all standards previously obtained. For her efforts and achievements, she received an Air Force Achievement Medal. Wells also demonstrated her talents and teamwork ability once again during the unit's annual holiday party, planning and organizing the event. There were more than 300 people in attendance and the holiday party was recognized as one of the best in years. She has also helped organize, pack and send care packages to deployed Airmen. During the holiday season, after collecting toys for needy families, she assisted in wrapping and distributing more than 500 toys to our those families.

Soldiers, Airmen receive honors

By Major Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kansas Army and Air National Guard Soldiers and Airmen were named as the epitome among their peers during the 2009 Annual National Guard Association banquet held April 18, at the Ramada Inn in Topeka.

Army winners

Spc. Edwin Jones from Headquarters, 235th Regiment, was named as the Kansas Army National Guard's Soldier of the Year. Staff Sgt. Ryan L. Pierce, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment was the top noncommissioned officer. Both awardees were presented a bronze eagle statue and a certificate from the Enlisted National Guard Association for their efforts. Capt. Rodney Seaba, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry, was named outstanding Army Company Grade Officer of the Year, while Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Garr, 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation, won the

honor of being named the Warrant Officer of the Year.

Air Force winners

Tech. Sgt. Joseph Ullmer was named as the Kansas Outstanding Airman of the Year in the overall category for the Kansas Air National Guard. Senior Airman Olivia Kennedy of the 190th Air Refueling Wing was named the Airman of the Year for the Kansas Air National Guard. The 190th ARW stayed strong with Tech. Sgt. Joseph Ullmer being named the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and Master Sgt. Gary Holliday being named the Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the year. The 184th Intelligence Wing took home honors with the First Sergeant of the Year being awarded to Master Sgt. Dennis G. Farris, while the Honor Guard of the Year went to Staff Sgt. Aaron B. Santry. Air Force Company Grade Officer of the Year was Capt. Rich Moon of the 184th IW.

Competition, camaraderie the hallmarks of 2009 Sporting Clays shoot

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Jones with 39 and four doubles. Money was paid to the first place winner and then second and third place money were drawn from score cards. Sgt. Michael Silsby won second place money and Dave Rapson earned third place money. The first place team was the WANNABEE. Members included Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jack Hancock, Staff Sgt. Stan Jones, Staff Sgt. Justin Lawson and Lt. Col. Les Gellhaus. Their team shot down an impressive 229 points. Second Place went to the WILD CARDS team members, Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting, the adjutant general; retired Col. Don Jackson; Capt. Jeff Dickinson and Mr. John Kleinschmidt. Their score was 186. Third Place went to the JOCSTERS team members 1st Sgt. Randy Rice, Teresa Rice, Capt. James McCosh and Spc. Andrew Mulkey. They scored a total of 173 points.

BCTC MAINTENANCE, with team members Lt. Col. Tom Barnett, Richard Peplow, David Rapson and George Matthias, received second place money and TEAM GARRISON, with Team members Kyle Garrison, Shane Garrison, Will Roberts and Luke Hannan, drew third place money. The match ended around noon with brats, burgers and drinks being devoured by the shooters. They teased each other on shooting skills and compared notes on how they would do it differently next year. Even Bunting, whose team placed second this year, had his eyes and ears open for pointers. "Next year, my team will try to get the coveted first place trophies," Bunting said. "We have some work to do to catch up with the winners, but in what other sport can all the practice be as fun as the actual competition? It's going to be more exciting and better next year!"

Team Rose wins fourth tournament

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tires. The tournament allows us to visit with old and new friends." These are the final scores for the tournament. First place in the first flight belonged to Team Guthrie with a score of 72 (Chris Jackson, Mike Cochran, Clay Winters and Will Guthrie). The Steansen Team won second place in the second flight with a score of 65 (Dan

Fox, Terry Clain, Dena Swisher and Howard Steansen). For Hole Prizes, Ed Monteith was the closest to the pin on hole #5, the longest drive on hole #8 was Dena Swisher, the closest to the pin (and winning a new handmade professional driver) on hole #13 was Kevin Wilcox, the closest to the pin on #17 was Chris Eichen and the longest putt on hole #18 was Chuck Eacock.

35th Military Police Soldiers took on stress in Mo’s Gym

By Maj. Mike Wallace
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

During their in briefing entering Iraq, members of the 35th Military Police Company (Forward) unit heard a base psychologist refer to Camp Bucca as the most “angry place in the world.” Someone told them that you get to Camp Bucca happy, but leave stressful, on medication and with a little counseling. Stress is the main issue, will be the main issue and will stay the main issue for Camp Bucca.

But, the 35th MPs, mostly volunteers of the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry and 635th Armor Battalion and a handful of other MPs, didn’t just accept everyone’s opinions that they couldn’t do much about the stress at Camp Bucca because it was the home of detainee operations in Southern Iraq. They did something about it.

In keeping with Resiliency Center training program that Kansas Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Tod M. Bunting, promotes to all members of the Kansas National Guard, the unit decided to acquire a stress reliever by way of athletics in this Southern Iraq forward operating base.

A handful of former athletes found out that Staff Sgt. Ricardo Moreno had prior boxing training and experience and wanted some after-hours stress reliever besides the normal routine of watching movies in the “huts” or playing cards. This bunch gave countless hours of dedication and hard work for a chance to shine in the ring—the ring that took on the name of “Mo’s Gym”

RSP helps prepare recruits

By Pfc. Jessica Zullig,
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

No matter how long ago in your military career it may have been, you can, no doubt, still recall the unforgettable days spent at basic training. From early morning until late evening, the days were full of chaotic confusion as drill instructors force-fed all the need-to-know knowledge to become a Soldier. In just eight excruciating weeks, everything from marksmanship to marching was taught and, more often than not, it was done without any kind of prior experience or training.

In an effort to stop this cycle of disorientation and help reduce some of the confusion, the Army National Guard has the Recruit Sustainment Program. Not only does the RSP help out Soldiers, it helps mold them for their future military career and experiences.

Staff Sgt. Keith Bartlett explains what the Topeka armory’s RSP is about. “The instructors and I at the RSP every drill weekend are focused on molding civilians to Soldiers,” said Bartlett. “We get them from the mind set of working at a fast food restaurant to how a Soldier would think through things.”

Council Grove Soldiers show off newly remodeled armory

By Sgt. Charles Malloy, UPAR

The National Guard armory in Council Grove, Kan., recently underwent a year-long remodel. The much needed repairs included new energy efficient doors and windows, new restroom and kitchen facilities, new maintainable bay doors, and remodeled offices.

Built in the 1950s, the armory is currently the home of Detachment 3, 778th Transportation Company (HET). It also serves as a meeting place for the city of Council Grove. Local schools use the building for wrestling matches and basketball games, but it is also used for wedding receptions, flea markets and other events where large groups of people are present. The remodel has given not only the armory, but the National Guard a much needed face lift.

The cost of the remodeling project was an estimated \$250,000, according to Staff Sgt. Eric Dengler, the detachment’s full-

in honor of their instructor, Moreno. “Our Soldiers had to watch over some of the most dangerous detainees during the past year,” said Maj. Robert Stinson, commander of the deployed 35th MPs. “They were captured and brought to Camp Bucca from all over Iraq. The constant monitoring and security throughout this mission was very stressful on the unit.” “Having them ‘work off steam’ and their frustrations from the constant stressors that were inherent to the mission, this was a great way to alleviate stress build-up,” said Stinson.

“I think boxing was a lot of fun, personally,” said 1st Lt. Edwin Stremel, the compound commander and platoon leader for the Second Platoon.

“It was a great esprit de corps tool for the company. Many of the Soldiers from the 35th came out to support the Soldiers who were boxing and it made a positive impact on the morale and unity of the company as a whole,” said Stremel. “Boxing gave me and the Soldiers something to do on our down time and it’s a great way to share my boxing knowledge. It also gave me a positive outlook about our mission, which was not very popular but necessary. It was good to see something positive come out of something negative.”

Moreno, now a sergeant first class, comments that “these guys had motivation and desire to learn a new discipline and represent our unit and Kansas during weekly bouts. This helped, because their frustra-

The goal of the RSP is to create a strong foundation of training that gives the recruit the ability to achieve success while attending Basic Combat Training and providing the parent unit a Soldier who is military occupational specialty qualified.

The Army National Guard Recruit Sustainment Program prepares Soldiers for the successful completion of BCT and subsequent Military Occupation Speciality qualification. It provides full visibility on the preparation process and ensures future Soldiers and warriors are read to ship to BCT mentally prepared, physically ready and administratively correct.

Pvt. Beronia Craig, a Kansas State University freshman, said that she hopes to accomplish as much physical training as she can to prepare for the challenges ahead.

“Just coming and soaking up as much information is important. I sit and do what the instructors tell me because I know it will help me when I go to BCT,” said Craig.

The RSP indoctrinates Soldiers with the skills required to successfully MOS qualify and return to their units fit, trained and ready to deploy in support of their unit’s mission.

time administrator.

“This armory is important not only to the unit, but the city of Council Grove as a whole,” said Dengler. “The people in this town have grown up seeing this red brick building and have come to love it.”

Recently, an open house was held at the armory. It was a time for the public to come and see the improvements that were made, as well as get an up-close look at the trucks that they see rolling through their town. The kids especially like coming to these events. They get a chance to look inside these massive vehicles and learn what they are used for.

A ribbon cutting was held recently, as well. In attendance were Cynthia Engle, Council Grove mayor; current and former Chamber of Commerce presidents Linda Wessel and Jolene Bremer; Maj. Brian Shoenhofer, battalion executive officer; and retired Col. John White, former commander in Council Grove.



Staff Sgt. Richard Moreno (left) works with Spc. Dennis Wittmer in “Mo’s Gym,” at Camp Bucca, Iraq. Moreno helped build a boxing team that provided a much-needed stress-reliever for some Soldiers of the 35th Military Police Company. (Photo provided)

tions and stress were taken to the ring instead of it showing up at work on the main mission.”

The equipment was old, moldy and mostly unserviceable, but the Kansans made the best of it and rose to the occasion by displaying many victories, tough losses and, most importantly, unit cohesion by huge turnouts and support by the 35th.

The boxers included Sgt. Derek Upchurch, Spc. Glen Carter, Spc. Dennis Witmer, 1st Lt. Edwin Stremel, Spc. Adam Schuetz, Spc. Joshua Moore, Senior Airman John Garcia and Sgt. Brian Carman. In the corner were Moreno and “cutman” Sgt. Coy Anderson with Pfc. Christopher Pruett, Pfc. Charles Riley, Spc. Jonathan Palmer, Spc. James Hallagin and Spc. Kristina Santos training and competing less than the main team.

The unit deployed to Fort Bliss, Texas, in June 2007 and returned in May 2008. Upon return, they competed in a sanctioned ‘Tough-man’ competition with a chance to compete in Las Vegas, Nev., placing better than they expected with four wins and four losses out of four members on the team.

One late arrival to the team, a Washington D.C. teammate, Spc. Femi “OG” Ogan-dareone, was a runner-up winner in the championship, but lost on points. The Kansas Guardsman cheered him on be-

cause Moreno trained him and worked his corner.

Moreno currently works for the Area Three Recruiting and Retention Command. During his deployment, he was the production recruiter/strength manager for the company, and the compound shift non-commissioned officer in charge. He is married to Lori and they live in Wichita with their six children.

According to Stinson, the unit didn’t go to Iraq to box, but through diligence and perseverance, the boxing had a positive impact on the unit and the morale of its Soldiers. Boxing helped the unit get through some stressful and monotonous times by showcasing the athletic and talents of Kansans that were defending liberties overseas.

Everyone points to Moreno for being the driving and prudent force in forming Mo’s Gym. He just shrugs his shoulders and says, “Mo’s Gym was a great get-away for the troops and a good way for me to give back to the guys in a form of mentorship.”

“I love soldiering and giving of my 22 years of service to anyone who wants to learn,” he continued, “but if you want to learn about yourself, then get in the ring and glove-up! Just like my fighters who did so in the world’s most angry place.”

Kansas Civil Air Patrol hosts annual conference in Salina

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR

Part of what has become a Memorial Day tradition is family and friends coming together for food and companionship. This was what members of the Kansas Wing of the Civil Air Patrol did over the holiday weekend during the 2009 Civil Air Patrol Conference at the Kansas Regional Training Institute in Salina.

The conference began on Friday evening, May 22, with a meet and greet barbecue at the Wing headquarters. On Saturday, the feature presentations were made by Brig. Gen. Reggie L. Chitwood, the Civil Air Patrol National vice commander; Col. Steven W. Kudder, Civil Air Patrol North Central Region commander; along with Col. Regina M. Aye, Kansas Civil Air Patrol Wing commander.

Chitwood spoke on behalf of Maj. Gen. Amy S. Courter, the Civil Air Patrol’s National commander. He referenced the nine national headquarters objectives for 2009/2010. He emphasized the goal of making the Civil Air Patrol the “Resource of Choice” for conducting search and rescue and other low-level route and mapping missions.

“At \$135 per hour, the Civil Air Patrol is the most cost effective search and rescue resource,” said Chitwood.

Chitwood noted that in Fiscal Year

2008, the Civil Air Patrol was credited with 91 lives saved and the Civil Air Patrol conducts 80 percent of the First Air Force’s homeland security missions.

Kudder congratulated the Kansas Wing on its performance over the past year under Col. Aye. This was Aye’s first year as Wing commander.

Kudder also spoke on how the various Wings within the North Central Region have come together to aid other states during the past year. He said that at any one time teams from three or more Wings were involved during the flooding in the Dakotas this spring. Aye reviewed the Wing’s past year’s performance and goals for the next year based on the National Commander’s nine goals.

In the afternoon, the conference broke into small subject matter working groups. There was also photographic flight training for mission observers and scanners. The day ended with a formal banquet with Lt. Col. Lee Hoskins providing the keynote address.

While the conference was in progress, 30 Civil Air Patrol cadets were taking part in the Airman Leadership School. Running from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon, the school is conducted along the lines of an Active Duty Non-commissioned Officer Course.

242nd Engineers clear future training site for 35th Division

By **Spc. Ashley D. Ledford, UPAR**

A small group consisting of three Soldiers from the 242nd Engineering Company headed to Fort Leavenworth, Kan., on April 6, 2009. They were on a “Field of Dreams” mission, in which they assisted the 35th Infantry Division in clearing and grubbing about two acres of land to use for infantry field training operations. With only a skid steer and a bulldozer, Staff Sgt. David Coats, Spc. Joshua Russ and Spc.

Christopher Akers uprooted trees, smoothed and leveled the ground and fixed the storm water drainage in that area. When they reached the job site, they found a horseshoe-shaped ditch with high ground in the middle. There were also two berms, one to the north and one to the west. They were instructed to fill in the ditch, level the berm to the north and clear out the many baby saplings growing in the area. Coats hooked a logging chain around each

sapling while Akers pulled them out of the ground with the skid steer. After all the saplings were pulled, the three Soldiers called it a day. On the second day, all that was left was to level out the area and the other berm, which Russ did with ease on the bulldozer. They put up a silt fence at the end of the day to help with the drainage of the area. When everything was done, the finished product was a two-acre, level piece of land

sloping slightly to the northwest for drainage purposes. The next day they loaded up the equipment and headed for home. Coats thought the mission went well over-all despite a few mechanical problems with the equipment, which were fixed quickly. All together, the mission was a great learning experience for those involved and everyone took something away from it.



Spc. Joshua Russ levels a field. (Photo by Spc. Ashley D. Ledford, UPAR)

Black Hawk mechanics get their turn in the spotlight

Sgt. **Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR**

The Soldiers at the Kansas Army National Guard Flight Facility at Forbes Field, Topeka, engage in many activities during the course of their daily duties. One thing that they were not expecting on the afternoon of April 16 was to be part of a recruiting commercial. The Kansas Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command has contracted Gizmo Pictures of Topeka to produce four recruiting commercials. “We are producing four different commercials using members of the Kansas Army National Guard that will be aired on local television stations throughout the state,” explained Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Witzke. The National Guard Bureau makes recruiting commercials that air across the nation. These commercial will be made by Kansans using Kansas Soldiers directed at recruiting Kansans. The commercials will highlight aviation, transportation and field artillery. The fourth will be a Spanish language commercial. Featured in the commercials will be the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation and the 1st Battalion, 171st General Support Aviation and their UH 60 Black Hawk helicopters;

Field Maintenance Shop #9, representing transportation and the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery. “We want to show Guard members working together as a team on their own equipment,” said Witzke. “Young men and women are looking to belong to something bigger than they are. They are looking to be part of a team and the Guard can offer that.” The Gizmo Pictures team filmed Sgt. 1st Class Lori Frerichs, Sgt. Shon Jackson, Sgt. Sean Mullis, Sgt. Ricardo Ruiz, Sgt. Sheldon Snodgrass and Spc. Rigoberto Baeza from different angles using trolley-mounted and hand-held cameras as they worked on the Black Hawks. This footage will be added to footage taken of the unit conducting sling loading operations. It will take two to three months before the commercial will be ready for broadcasting. Regional demographics will direct where the commercials will be shown. For example, since the aviation units are based in the eastern part of the state, the aviation commercial will primarily be shown there. “It was great to have been part this recruiting effort,” said Baeza. “It is good that they were able to show the diversity that we have in the Guard working together as team.”



Soldiers working at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Topeka go about their business as a cameraman films them for a recruiting commercial. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)



A skid steer was useful for uprooting trees. (Photo by Spc. Ashley D. Ledford, UPAR)

73rd Civil Support Team deploys for exercise via C5

By **Capt. Kyle Chansler, UPAR**

73rd Civil Support Team

The 73rd Civil Support Team participated in an airlift from Forbes Field, Topeka, Kan., to Hill Air Force Base, Utah, March 21-27, 2009. Part of the team’s yearly training guidance is to prepare and train for both ground and air deployments. The unit loaded its equipment, vehicles and personnel onto an aircraft and deployed as part of its air mobility operations training. The team worked in conjunction with the 105th Airlift Wing from the New York National Guard based at Stewart Air National Guard Base. The 105th Airlift Wing flies the C-5 “Galaxy.” The Galaxy is one of the largest aircrafts in the world. It is 247.8

feet long, with a wingspan of 222.8 feet and a “T-tail” more than 65 feet high. In Utah, the team traveled to Dugway Proving Grounds to conduct chemical warfare and biological warfare agent training. The Civil Support Team is a small highly trained National Guard organization that supports local, state, and federal agencies responding to attacks that could involve weapons of mass destruction. The Civil Support Team supports civil authorities at a domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high yield explosive incident site by identifying CBRNE agents/ substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with appropriate requests for state support.



Sgt. Jacob Durkes eases one of the 73rd Civil Support Team vehicles off a C5 Galaxy at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. The Civil Support Team conducted air load training March 21-27, 2009, with the 105th Airlift Wing out of Stewart Air National Guard Base, New York. While in Utah, the team conducted extensive Chemical and Biological training at Dugway Proving Grounds. (Photo by Capt. Kyle Chansler, UPAR)

Officer Candidate School: Training the leaders of tomorrow

By Officer Candidate Tabitha Baker
200th Public Affairs Detachment,
New Mexico National Guard

Every year, hundreds of Soldiers pursuing a commission in the Army National Guard begin with two weeks of intense training in Salina, Kan. This is the first step on the road to a commission through the Officer Candidate School program. The Kansas Army National Guard has taken the lead for the past 53 years in training the future officers of the Army National Guard in a rigorous course. Candidates from nine states combine for the two week program known as Phase I. Following this initial two weeks, Soldiers return to their home state and attend OCS training once a month for 14 months and finish OCS with another two week training for Phase III.

Beginning bright and early on day one, candidates get the first taste of how life at phase one will be. After in-processing, there is a short welcome ceremony as the platoon trainers wait outside for the candidates. When the ceremony is over the doors open and the candidates run outside to meet their first challenge. The challenge is designed to familiarize candidates with remaining in control of a situation in a highly stressful and intense environment.

“Phase 1 was in-depth about the Army way of life and the inner workings of the Army. As a future officer I feel I am better equipped to go and conquer anything that comes my way,” said Officer Candidate Erin Kelly.

For the remainder of the first week, candidates are tested in a classroom environment on troop leading procedures, Army training management systems, applied map reading, cultural awareness and Soldier



Platoon Trainers counsel officer candidates during the first challenge of Officer Candidate School Phase 1. (Photo by Spc. Kereena Clarke)

team development. Platoon Instructor Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Robles from New Mexico said, “Despite the relentless stressors’ put upon the officer candidates, the majority stood up and met the challenge. Many, for the first time, found out the willingness to excel beyond the standard.”

Candidates are also evaluated in different leadership positions ranging from squad leader all the way to company commander.

In addition to daily intense physical fitness sessions, candidates must also march long distances carrying 35 lbs of military gear. They are required to pass a five mile

ruck march for time, the first of three marches required for OCS.

At the end of week one, candidates jump on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the Kansas Army National Guard and fly to the field site where they will stay for the week.

While in a field training environment, candidates are tested on land navigation

skills and warrior task battle drills. These tasks cover a wide range of basic Soldier skills including how to set up a claymore mine, throw grenades and perform first aid.

“It is rewarding to watch the Candidates progress and develop their leadership abilities” said Platoon Leader Capt. Ivan Hong from Kansas.

OCS Phase I is one of the most intense and important times for an officer candidate. Candidates will remember Phase I and Kansas as the place they began to be molded into an officer, where they learned how to work together while always willing to take charge of a situation.

“We learned a lot in a little bit of time,” said Officer Candidate Lynette Ham in the final days of Phase 1, “knowledge we will never forget. The instructors were knowledgeable and never gave up on us.”

The importance of training future officers is not lost on the Army National Guard who has been increasingly called upon for state and national missions. During recent years there has been an influx of demand for National Guard officers. It is vital to the success of a mission to have trained, qualified officers taking charge in leading fellow Soldiers to perform beyond the standard during any global or domestic mission. Many Soldiers are willing to take up the banner of the officer corps, and the training they receive during OCS starts them on solid footing for a career of learning and performing above and beyond the call of duty.

Fishing tournament honors fallen Kansas Guardsmen

By Spc. Lori Hudson, UPAR
250th Forward Support Company

The Fifth Annual Kansas Veteran’s Memorial Bass Tournament was held on April 25, 2009, at Coffey County Lake near the Wolf Creek Generating Station in Burlington, Kan. The tournament celebrates the freedom that we enjoy as Americans and recognizes the fallen heroes of the Kansas National Guard who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Despite menacing white caps on the lake, a record 22 teams participated in the event. Teams of two to five fishermen arrived before 6 a.m. at the boat launch to be the first to get their boats in the lake when the tournament began shortly after dawn. A few teams showed up for the event only to decide not to go out on the lake due to the 27 plus mile-per-hour winds that were reported.

The 2nd Battalion, 130th Field Artillery organized and hosted the tournament and Soldiers from the 250th Forward Support Company set up and worked the event. Proceeds from the event were donated to the 2-130th Field Artillery Family Readiness Group. Sgt. 1st Class Kelly Stubbs, Readiness NCO for the 250th FSC cooked brats and burgers for the more than 100 participants and guests. Jenny Hageman,

Tammy Hughes and Jen Yunk, members of the Human Resources Department at Wolf Creek, served guests as they filed through the 250th FSC’s Mobile Kitchen Trailer.

“We enjoy the fact we have such a great partnership with the adjutant general,” said Steve Hedges, vice president of Oversight at Wolf Creek. “We appreciate our friends in the armed forces.”

Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting and State Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Rodina of the Kansas National Guard, along with Hughes presented awards to the top five teams who placed in the tournament. Bunting opened the ceremony by reading the 10 names of those from the state of Kansas who died in action during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, before observing a moment of silence in their honor.

“The first two Soldiers were avid fishermen and the tournament is to honor them,” explained Bunting. “It’s because of their sacrifice we can be here today.”

A \$100 gift certificate and the first place award went to Eric Kraft and his team. Other teams who placed were: Team Don Jones – second, Team Heath Lawson – third, Team Bill Ledford – fourth, and Team James Stratton – fifth.



A team’s catch is weighed during the Fifth Annual Kansas Veteran’s Memorial Bass Tournament. (Photo by Spc. Lori Hudson, UPAR, 250th Forward Support Company)

Foundation donates to STARBASE

By Staff Sgt. Tim Traynor
Public Affairs Office

The Capitol Federal Foundation presented the Kansas STARBASE program with a \$5,000 grant. This is the third consecutive year the organization chose to contribute to STARBASE.

“We appreciate the generosity of Capitol Federal and their continued support of the STARBASE Program,” said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. “It’s support from organizations like this that make it possible to continue expanding our efforts to help Kansans and our communities.”

“It’s a great honor to have an organization take such an interest in furthering the education of children in math, science, technology and engineering,” said Jeff Gabriel, Kansas STARBASE director.

“Donations like this help with what federal funds wouldn’t necessarily provide,” said Gabriel. “This donation will greatly help our hands-on robotics curriculum.”

The Capitol Federal Foundation was established to benefit the communities in which Capitol Federal operates. The main areas of focus for accomplishing this mission are education, community development, the United Way and other charitable purposes.

Kansas STARBASE was launched in 1992 to ignite the interest of youth (4th - 6th graders) in science, math, technology, goal setting and positive life choices by exposing them to the technological environments and positive role models of the Kansas Air and Army National Guard.



For information on Kansas STARBASE, go to www.kansasstarbase.org.


Getting ready to ride





Larry Levindofske, Yellow Ribbon Support Specialist with the Adjutant General’s Department, gives instructions to participants in the Second Annual Kansas National Guard Museum Poker Run on June 13. The benefit event began with a pancake feed at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard in Topeka, followed by a poker run to Wamego and back to Topeka, culminating in a chili cook-off at the museum. (Photo by Keith Hannah)


Awards and Decorations

Kansas Army National Guard
Legion of Merit

Col. Ronald Robinson, IG, JFHQ KS, Topeka
Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Raymond K. Bergman, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Belinda A. Christian, KSARNG Med Det, Lenexa
Lt. Col. John D. Johnson, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Kevin R. Schenker, Training Site Det, Salina
Maj. Shelly L. Bausch, 73rd CST, Topeka
Maj. William A. Strong, HHC, 169th CSSB, Olathe
Chief Warrant Officer 4 John W. Davied, HHQ, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Richard G. Leiker, Training Site Det, Salina, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Newton A. Webber, HQ, 235th Regt, Salina
Master Sgt. Timothy R. Roloff, FSC, 891st Eng Bn, Iola, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Robert J. Sanderson, HQ, 235th Regt (RTI), Salina
Sgt. 1st Class Dennis C. Bryson, Co B, 1st Bn, 635th Ar, Junction City
Sgt. 1st Class David M. Koch, Co A, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf Regt (CAB), Lawrence
Sgt. 1st Class Roberta L. Sprouse, Rec and Ret Cmd, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Michael D. Jackson, Det 1, Co C, 1st Bn, 171st Avn, Topeka
Sgt. Mark R. Skinner, Det 1, Co C, 1st Bn, 171st Avn, Topeka

Army Commendation Medal

Capt. Drew W. Polen, 772nd Eng Co, Pittsburg
1st Lt. Eric A. Hollingsworth, Rec and Ret, Topeka
1st Lt. Todd M. Lavery, 73rd CST, Topeka, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Dustin A. Nash, 73rd CST, Topeka

Army Achievement Medal

Sgt. Darby R. Callahan, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Sgt. Bradly A. Henry, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Sgt. Christopher M. Mullen, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Sgt. Anna M. Pedicino, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Sgt. Brian F. Wolf, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Spc. Adam L. Babcock, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Spc. Bret A. Chacey, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Spc. Dale E. Hennigh, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Spc. Dustin D. Johnson, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Spc. Bangone Sihongheune, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Pfc. Nicolette Carter, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City
Pvt. Sara Benner, 778th Trans Co, Kansas City

Kansas Air National Guard
Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Jeannine L. Garnsey, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Rohn H. Hamilton, 184th IW, Wichita
Lt. Col. Janet Hanson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Lt. Col. Christopher J. Mills, 184th IW, Wichita
Lt. Col. Steven Rexer, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, with 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Anthony Smith, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Philip Mahan, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. David Rodriguez, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Robert Bolin, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. Keith M. Daley, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Lisa M. Price, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Ronald Grieve, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Steven A Juhl, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Edward R. Kulick Jr., 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Eric R. Smith, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Maria J. Whited, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Christopher J. Hines, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Vic Vinson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Corlis, 190th ARW, Topeka

Air Force Commendation Medal

Lt. Col. Hans Neidhardt, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Capt. Richard E. Moon, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Chief Master Sgt. Michael Luck, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Montgomery, 190th ARW, Topeka

Senior Master Sgt. Keith Guffy, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Master Sgt. Janet Smith, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Homer T. King, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Christopher D. Platzer, 184th IW, Wichita
Master Sgt. Tammy Wellsswitzer, 190th ARW, Topeka, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Kirk H. Brennecke, 184th IW, Wichita
Tech. Sgt. Zachary R. Constance, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. David Costales, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Stacie Lancasterkitts, 190th ARW, Topeka, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Carlos R. Ortiz Jr., 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. John A. Fitzpatrick, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Kaci L. Hunter, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Barrett D. Medley, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Kimberly A. Stanfield, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Nathan C. Thibault, 184th IW, Wichita

Air Force Achievement Medal


<i>(Editor: In the last issue of the Plains Guardian there were several members of the 184th IW that were identified as being with the 190th ARW. The corrections are printed here. We apologize for the error.)</i>
Lt. Col. James H. Culp, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Lt. Col. Joseph M. Jabara, 184th IW, Wichita
Lt. Col. Steven Rexer, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Capt. Julie Burns, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Capt. Jeffrey L. Schmitt, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Patrick Cochran, 190th ARW, Topeka, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Harold Cox, 190th ARW, Topeka, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Sean Hall, 190th ARW, Topeka, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Timothy A. Kern, 184th IW, Wichita, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Brian J. Leabo, 184th IW, Wichita, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Jeffrey S. Milligan, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Efrain M. Rueles, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Jerry D. Swift, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Steven Tremblay, 190th ARW, Topeka, Silver Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Michael E. Vore, 184th IW, Wichita, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
Master Sgt. Jack D. Willenberg, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. John S. Bogart III, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Steven W. Cussins, 184th IW, Wichita, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Cheryl L. Dickinson, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Adam S. Fortner, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Scott Gilchrist, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Timothy A. Green, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. George Jeter, 190th ARW, Topeka, 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Randall A. Kendall, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. David Seaba, 190th ARW, Topeka, 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Sarah Sell, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Phillip Shelite, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Todd Smith, 190th ARW, Topeka, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. David A. Steele, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Jack R. Wait, 184th IW, Wichita, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Tech. Sgt. Leland S. Weathers, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Kameron J. Bissell, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Lindsay M. Bosquez, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Christopher Bourland, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Robert C. Calhoun, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Michael W. Clark, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Samuel A. Clark, 184th IW, Wichita, 4th Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Shane M. Clarke, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey G. Crees, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Paul Cross, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Brent E. Geschwentner, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Sean Greenlee, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Edwin Hailey, JFHQ KS-AC, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Christopher Hawkins, 190th ARW, Topeka, 2 Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Matthew Hogan, 190th ARW, Topeka, 1 Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Darrin Jones, 190th ARW, Topeka

(CAB), Wichita
Sgt. David Hoggatt, 1161st Spt Co., Hutchinson
Sgt. Nancy Lister, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Sgt. James Nickelson, Det 1, 772nd Engr Co, Pittsburg
Sgt. Elgie Richard Jr., 35th MP Co, Topeka
Sgt. David Stack, Co B, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf Regt (CAB), Wichita
Sgt. Christopher Stinchcomb, Co E, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf Regt (CAB), Wichita
Spc. William Graves, HHD, 635th Support Gp, Hutchinson
Pfc. Steven Leonard, Co A, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf Regt (CAB), Lawrence

Kansas Air National Guard
Col. Randy Roebuck, 190th ARW, Topeka
Lt. Col. Thomas Ballou, 190th ARW, Topeka
Lt. Col. Brian Becker, 190th ARW, Topeka
Lt. Col. William Hendricks, 190th ARW, Topeka
Maj. Robert Crossley, 190th ARW, Topeka
Chief Master Sgt. Michael Luck, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Master Sgt. William Mukes, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Janet Dunn, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. William Gilliland, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Ronald Grieve, 190th ARW, Topeka
Master Sgt. Chelle Price, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Nels Espeseth, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Randall Shull, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Vic Vinson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Christian Wickline, 190th ARW, Topeka
Tech. Sgt. Marshaun Winston, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Brian Coppage, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Corlis, 190th ARW, Topeka

Staff Sgt. Kyle Kaberline, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Curtis J. Klaus, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Chad M. Marx, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Charles A. Metzger, 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. Francis T. Nguyen Jr., 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Jody K. Olsen, 184th IW, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Adam Rees, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Billy G. Smith Jr., 184th IW, Wichita, 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster
Staff Sgt. John Steinert, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Kory Tinsley, 190th ARW, Topeka
Staff Sgt. Gary Williams, 190th ARW, Topeka, 2nd Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Airman Curtis Anderson, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Brian Beatty, 190th ARW, Topeka

City, county officials tour GPJTC

Government officials from Salina and Saline County received an overview of the Great Plains Joint Training Center and its Crisis City venue during a briefing by the Kansas Adjutant General’s Department May 6 in Salina. The GPJTC is a joint civilian/military training facility. The meeting at the Kansas Regional Training Institute was hosted by Brig. Gen. Norman Steen, director of the GPJTC.

Steen discussed the economic benefits of the GPJTC to the city of Salina and surrounding region. A number of exercises hosted there throughout the year bring in people from around the country and more are planned in the future. In addition, the facility has brought new jobs to Salina. Representatives from the Salina Airport Authority, Kansas State University and the city and county attended.

The GPJTC provides a location where military and emergency responders can train in a realistic environment either sepa-

TRICARE review should be part of your predeployment checklist

By Tyler Patterson

TriWest Healthcare Alliance

If there’s one universal rule in the military, it’s that pre-deployment days can be hectic.

With so much going on, it can be easy to overlook your TRICARE benefit, but making sure your family has healthcare coverage while you are deployed is easy.

First, make sure your spouse has access to all necessary records. This includes a copy of your orders at the bare minimum. If your spouse will need access to your medical records, you will need to prepare an “authorization to disclose” form. You can download this form at www.triwest.com, from the “Find a Form” page.

Next, make sure the records for you and each family member are current in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. Additionally, show your spouse how to make changes in DEERS at a nearby ID card-issuing office, by phone (1-800-538-9552), or online at http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers.

After that, check your family’s identification cards. If any will expire while you’re deployed, be sure to replace them

Veterans Affairs welcoming vets home with new Web site, blog

The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched its new “Returning Veterans” Web site -- www.oefoif.va.gov -- to welcome home Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts with a social, Veteran-centric Web site focusing on their needs and questions.

“VA is entering the world of Web 2.0, because that’s where this generation of Veterans is already communicating,” said Dr. Gerald M. Cross, VA’s Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Health. “We’re opening our doors to them virtually to let them know what they can expect when they step through our doors in reality.”

The Web site will feature videos, Veteran

Family Support Awards Breakfast

Continued from Page 9

Melissa Moon and Stephanie Woodrome of the 184th Intelligence Wing, JoAnne D. Myers of the 35th Military Police Company, Bernadine Boyer of the 35th Infantry

Senior Airman Kyle Brabb, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Douglas R. Carey, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Kirsten E. Farkas, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Kyle F. Flair, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Jonathan Henry, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Matthew Leonard, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman James W. Lewis, 184th IW, Wichita, 1st Oak Leaf Cluster
Senior Airman Faith E. Martin, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Brett A. Piene, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Brett A. Shouse, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman John A. Simmons, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Ryan Sipes, 190th ARW, Topeka
Senior Airman Danny R. Squires, 184th IW, Wichita
Senior Airman Kevin Williams, 190th ARW, Topeka
Airman 1st Class Justin A. Burget, 184th IW, Wichita

rately or jointly to prepare for real-life disaster response. The site includes the Smoky Hill Weapons Range and also Crisis City, designed for the military and first responders to exercise their plans when responding to a disaster in a local community.

Crisis City currently has a rail disaster venue which includes rail cars, tracks and services donated by Union Pacific, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, RJ Corman, Mid America Cars Inc., OxyChem, Simplot, Energy Transportation Incorporated and Transcaer. Other venues planned or under construction include a rubble pile for search and rescue training; an “urban terrain” area which will be ideally suited for training in house-to-house searches, hostage situations and other crisis situations; hazmat training; an agriculture training venue, and pipeline venue.

For more information on GPJTC, go to: http://www.kansas.gov/ksadjutantgeneral/Library/GPJRTC.htm

before you leave. Current ID cards are required for accessing health care through your TRICARE benefit.

Finally, make sure your spouse knows the basics of your TRICARE coverage. Encourage your spouse or child’s guardian to attend a mobilization briefing or Family Readiness Group meeting in their area. Benefit videos and information are also available at www.triwest.com/t2u.

Make a list of contact numbers: Your primary care manager/family physician; a nearby emergency room; a beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator; and TriWest, your regional contractor. This information can be found online at www.triwest.com. Registered users can find answers, check status of claims, authorizations and referrals and track expenses. You may also call 1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378).

Review your family’s TRICARE plan so they know how to properly access care and fill prescriptions.

For more pre-deployment tips, visit http://fhp.osd.mil/preDeployment.jsp. Members of the reserve component can also visit www.triwest.com/ngr for additional pre- and post-deployment advice.

stories, and a blog where Veterans are encouraged to post feedback. The site also will restructure the traditional index-of-benefits format found on other VA pages into question-based, categorized, and easily navigated links by topic. This will allow Veterans to find benefits of interest easily and discover related benefits as they explore. “We hope our returning Veterans find this site easy and helpful, but also engaging,” Dr. Cross said. “As the site grows, we will be linking to Veterans’ blogs and highlighting more of their own stories from their own views. We are their VA, so we are eager to provide a forum for Veterans to discuss their lives.”

Division, Chris Bean of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Linda Cercone and Leah Zeigler, 169th Troop Command.

Cliff Mitchell was awarded the Family Program Office Hero of the Year award.

Retirements

Kansas Army National Guard
Lt. Col. Raymond Bergman, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Maj. Norman Jennings, HHC, 35th Inf Div, Fort Leavenworth
Capt. Mark Moore, HHC, 35th Inf Div, Fort Leavenworth
Chief Warrant Officer 4 John Davied, JFHQ KS-LC, Topeka
Master Sgt. Luat Annino, HHC, 287 Sustainment Bde, Wichita
Master Sgt. Rodney Prosser, HQ, 235th Regt (RTI), Salina
Master Sgt. Roger Sinclair, Rec & Ret, Topeka
Master Sgt. Daniel Spellman, HHD, 169th CSSB, Olathe
Sgt. 1st Class Kirk Meyer, 35th Inf Div Tactical Cmd, Fort Leavenworth
Sgt. 1st Class Perry Reed, HHC(-), 2nd Bn, 137th Inf Reg (CAB), Kansas City
Sgt. 1st Class Roberta Sprouse, Rec & Ret Cmd, Topeka
Staff Sgt. David James, Det 2, Co D, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Salina
Staff Sgt. Roger McGill, Det 1, Btry B, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Lenexa
Staff Sgt. Jimmie McNickle, Det 2, 731st Trans Co, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Robert Rosendahl, 242nd Engr Co, Coffeyville
Staff Sgt. Bryan Shultz, HHB, 1st Bn, 161st FA, Wichita
Staff Sgt. Brian Stryker, HQ, 235th Regt (RTI), Salina
Staff Sgt. Alsford Van, Det 2, Co E, 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Salina
Sgt. Max Buchfinck, Co E (-), 1st Bn, 108th Avn, Topeka
Sgt. Patrick Featherby, Co E, 2nd Bn, 137th Inf Regt

Veteran recalls his WWII service with the 35th Infantry Division

By Col. Rex Johnson
35th Division Public Affairs

At 91 years old, former Staff Sgt. Roy Clark recalls his combat service from World War II. Clark was a machine gunner with Company E, 137th Regiment of the 35th Infantry Division and is one of the last survivors of 35th ID World War II veterans.

During World War II, the 35th was an active unit serving in combat. Clark served in Europe until the end of the war in 1945.

When asked why he joined, Clark explained that he wanted to contribute to the war effort. Following the news about the war and the possibility of the Axis forces taking over Europe, and possibly the world, he felt that he had to do something. He enlisted on March 21, 1944, leaving his job at a steel mill in Kansas City.

“I love my country and I just felt like Hitler was going strong,” said Clark. “And I figured if I could do anything to slow him down I would. So I just enlisted.”

Like many Soldiers serving in Europe during the war, Clark’s unit faced several hardships. He recalled some of the more challenging times occurred in December 1944. At that time the 137th, located in Northeast France and facing fatigue and hunger, were brought out of the reserves and reintroduced into combat.

“I was cold, I can tell you for sure,” said Clark. “A lot of times we did not have much food. Had we not had potatoes in the bins we probably would not have made it... Sometimes we would walk all night to get to a different section and then fight all day and then walk the next night.”

“So we did not have very good hours,”



This photo, dated 1944, is one of the reminders Roy Clark has of his service with the 35th Infantry Division during World War II. (Photo provided)

Clark lightheartedly adds.

Clark recalled one of his more sobering memories. His section had been moving for several days without much food, water or the chance to perform much personal hygiene. They were looking for a place to shower, rest and eat.

“We got into a house,” said Clark. “We spent quite a bit of time cleaning up and shaving. And of course, we needed water so we drank a lot of water. And the pump quit working. So we found a bucket to put down the well. But we could not get the bucket to sink. So we finally found a flashlight and shoved it down in there. We could see five bodies floating around down in the well.”



Today, Clark still recalls those days with clarity and enjoys attending reunions to see some of his few remaining combat buddies. (Photo provided)

Clark explained after seeing the bodies in the well, they could no longer drink the water there; even though they were thirsty.

He went on to explain that all of the businesses were closed down and that the streets were devoid of people. This was because there was no one left alive in the village; the Nazis had slaughtered everyone.

Clark said in addition to slaughtering innocent civilians, the Nazis had forced many people into labor. Many of them were forced to dig anti-tank trenches. Others were even forced into service as foot soldiers.

Clark’s section had captured about three or four Germans that were forced to serve and fight for Hitler. When he realized that their will to fight was not strong, he tried to persuade them to go back to the Nazi soldiers and encourage them to surrender. But they refused, more out of fear for their own lives.

“After they had been talking to me, as soon as they stepped out (to return to their unit), the Germans would have killed them,” said Clark. “So we could not do that (send them back).”

Clark’s combat tour was not without personal injury. His section was attacked by German mortars on Feb. 27, 1945. Two of his comrades perished in the attack, one sustained a broken arm and Clark was wounded.

“I got shrapnel in my right thigh. It wasn’t too bad,” Clark said boldly. “But it was bad enough to put me out of commission.”

Clark recalled that the two Soldiers killed in the attack that wounded him were new to

the unit, arriving just two days earlier. “They were killed before they even had a chance,” he said.

Clark spent the following two months recovering at a hospital in Paris. During that time, his leg healed and he was ready to go back and continue. But by the time he returned to his unit, the war in Europe was almost over. Clark returned home and was awarded the Purple Heart for his injuries.

Clark’s story of that fateful day did not end with his combat tour in Europe. One of the two men killed had a daughter who was about three years old at the time of his death. Her name was Brenda and in 2003 she had put a story in the newspaper asking to speak with anyone who may have served with her father. Clark wrote back to her, telling Brenda that he had served with her father and he had been wounded in the attack that claimed her father’s life.

Brenda was happy to hear from someone who served with her father. She and her husband flew from Tennessee to Fort Scott to meet with Clark. It brought Brenda a sense of closure and peace to be able to speak with someone who had served with her father. She is still close with Clark and continues to stay in touch with him to this day. She and her husband have even driven Clark to attend reunions of the 35th Infantry Division and reconnect with his fellow Soldiers.

With a combat tour behind him, Clark is proud of his service. But the thing that makes him more proud is the legacy of military service with his family. Two of his great-grandchildren have also served in uniform.

One great grandson was Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Campbell, U.S. Air Force, who served in Iceland. Campbell was tragically killed by a drunk driver in 2002 and is buried at Fort Scott National Cemetery.

His other great-grandson is Staff Sgt. Daniel T. Koppa, U.S. Marine Corps, serving aboard the USS Comstock for the third deployment in Middle East. Koppa became a father this past February and due to his deployment has yet to meet his new son face-to-face. Despite this hardship, Koppa will be re-enlisting in the Marine Corps in 2010. Clark’s hope is that Koppa retires as a career Marine.

Widowed in 2005 when his wife, Nellie, passed away, Clark currently resides in Fort Scott, Kan.

Memorial Park and Wall honors veterans from Nemaha County

By Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR
On Sunday, May 23, over a hundred people came to Seneca to celebrate the true spirit of Memorial Day. They gathered together where U.S. Highway 36 intersects Kansas Highway 63 on Seneca’s eastern limits to dedicate the Nemaha County Veterans Memorial Park and Wall. The red brick wall held the names, on black grant plaques, of veterans, living and past, who had ties to Nemaha County.

Retired Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Mueting, Seneca, was a member of the wall committee. Mueting, whose name appears on the wall, is a former command sergeant major of the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation in Topeka and of the Regional Training Institute in Salina. He said that he was proud of the work that they did under the leadership of Ray Rottinghaus. Later in the ceremony he introduced the keynote speaker, retired Col. James A. Patton, 22nd District Judge. Seneca Mayor Joe Mitchell and 1st District Congressman Jerry Moran also

spoke at the event.

Starting the event at 4 p.m., the National Colors were brought in by the American Legion Riders. Local children placed roses on the names of veterans who died in action. The dedication ceremony lasted until 5 p.m. when the assembly went to find the names of their family members. Many veterans had their pictures taken with their plaques.

Sgt 1st Class Beverly Claycamp, Joint Forces Headquarters Kansas, said her father’s and great uncle’s names are on the wall. Claycamp grew up in Seneca and is a 20-year member of the Kansas Army National Guard.

“I am very proud of my father and his service,” said Claycamp. “I am also proud to be serving.”

The wall, visible from the highway, still has room for additional names and can be expanded as needed. As Moran said, the real American heroes are on this wall and in the audience and the young children who will one day answer the nation’s call.



An Honor Guard from the Seneca American Legion, American Legion Riders and Veterans of Foreign Wars performed the flag raising ceremony for the dedication of a Memorial Park and Wall in Seneca honoring all veterans from Nemaha County. (Photo by Sgt. Michael H. Mathewson, UPAR)

Program takes cue from Israelis

Continued from Page 1

“It takes time to learn that at least half of the job is mental preparation and understanding how stress will affect your performance,” said Fruchter. “If you prepare yourself beforehand, you have a better chance of coping with it. But if you are not prepared you have to think, and when you start thinking after-the-fact, usually your thought process is not clear and is not logical.”

“It’s just an incredible force multiplier to have stress management techniques and controls in place before we go overseas,” said Lt. John Laurin, 1-6 ADT.

Laurin, along with the other Soldiers and Airmen from the Agri-business Development Team, were given a chance to engage in a number of learning activities. The Israeli-led class demonstrated how a large majority of “stressors” could be dealt with simply by keeping an open line of communication.

“Many of the commanders have been deployed before, so they know what to expect and they know some of the things that will happen. This is information that will help their Soldiers and better help the commanders prepare to handle their Soldiers,” explained Fruchter.

“A lot of what they’re talking about here today are things that most guys don’t want to talk about,” said State Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen Rodina. “But what we want to do is de-stigmatize it and let them know that it’s alright. You’re having a normal reaction to a very abnormal situation.”

The Israeli Air Force has been using a very similar program such as this for nearly 20 years, implementing it into their normal training regime. The Kansas National Guard is using some of these methods in its Resiliency Center training program that is specifically catered to the needs of citizen Soldiers and Airmen.

Recovery journey on Oprah

Continued from Page 2

In addition to being awarded the Purple Heart for his combat-related injuries, Hill earned the Army Commendation Medal, two Army Achievement Medals, and the Combat Action Badge during his service in Iraq with the 731st Transportation Company in 2007. Along with his 2007 deployment, Hill is a veteran of deployments in 2002 and in 2005 to 2006 with the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment. He cur-

rently serves with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment.

Hill’s military service began in 1987, enlisting in the Texas Army National Guard for three years before deciding to become and active duty Soldier in the U.S. Army for four more years. After a two-year break from active-duty service, Hill joined the Kansas Army National Guard in 1996. He is currently still on medical leave from his unit due to his injuries.

PLAINS GUARDIAN

Sustainers share Earth Day with Iraqi school children

By Sgt. Heather Wright
287th Sustainment Brigade public affairs

Lt. Col. Anthony Randall, 287th Sustainment Brigade Special Troops Battalion executive officer, along with the brigade's command staff and Civil Military Operations team spent Earth Day, April 22, teaching students at Al Moamen School in Dhi Qar Province about the necessity and wonder of plants.

Randall's civilian job made him the perfect candidate for the task. He serves as the Kansas State Environmental Officer for the Kansas Army National Guard -- ensuring that the Guard conserves and protects the state's natural resources when conducting missions.

Randall began the lesson with the biology of trees and how they help make the air clean and provide food and shelter for humans and animals. After the lesson, Randall took questions.

"What's the most familiar tree in Kansas?" one student asked.

"Oak trees," Randall responded. He went on to explain, in simple terms, that oak trees are deciduous. "Unlike palm trees, oak trees lose their leaves in the autumn and are bare in the winter."

One student asked what type of soil he would need to plant a garden in his back-

yard. "I'd have to think about that one," Randall said with a chuckle. "I can't seem to get a garden going in my own backyard."

"The kids were very knowledgeable and inquisitive. It made it fun to be out here on Earth Day," said Randall.

After the brief lesson, the students eagerly lined up to plant their own flowers. They were each given a cup, soil and seeds. Randall demonstrated how to poke a finger in the soil to make a hole for the seeds, to cover it with soil and water it. He explained that they would need to keep the soil moist, "but not too wet," and to ensure they were placed in the sun for a little while every day for the plant to grow.

Next, the students watched as Col. Robert Schmitt, 287th Sustainment Brigade commander, Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Newton and Shaykh Tazir of the Al Ghizzie tribe planted a palm tree. The tree was placed in front of the new brick school currently under construction adjacent to the clay school the students currently occupy.

Newton, a principal for the Lansing, Kan., School district, was happy to participate. "Back at my school, they're celebrating Earth Day, too," said Newton. "It's a great thing to send back pictures and show that even though I'm a few miles away from Kansas, I participated in Earth Day, too."



Lt. Col. Anthony Randall, 287th Sustainment Brigade Special Troops Battalion executive officer, waters a newly planted seed for a student at Al Moamen School in Dhi Qar Province on Earth Day, April 22. The students planted seeds as part of Earth Day activities. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Heather Wright)

Guardisman named "Hometown Hero"

By Staff Sgt. Mark Hanson
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Kansas Army National Guardisman Staff Sgt. Jerrod Hays was honored as the "Hometown Hero" during the IndyCar Series Roadrunner Turbo Indy 300 racing event at the Kansas Speedway on Sunday, April 27. Prior to the event, Hays was given a VIP tour of the pit area, a ride in the pace car during the Parade Lap and a meet and greet with IndyCar driver Dan Wheldon.

"The first thing I thought of was, why?" said a surprised Hays. "There are a lot of Soldiers like me, and most of those Soldiers deserve this type of honor as well. I suppose I was just really floored to say the least."

"He's a hero to us, but I guess it just embarrasses him to be acknowledged like that," said Nancy Hays, Jerrod's wife.

Hays, Wellington, Kan., was wounded in Iraq while serving with Battery B, 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery for Operation Iraqi Freedom. After undergoing treatment for his injuries at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C., where he was awarded the Purple Heart by President George W. Bush, and his ongoing therapy for his injuries, Hays has returned to duty,

serving with Battery C (-), 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery, Kingman.

During a VIP luncheon at the infield of the raceway, Hays was presented with awards by both Wheldon and John Barnes the CEO and managing partner of Panther Racing.

"It's a pleasure and an honor to be here representing you guys," said Wheldon. "What you guys do, far, far outweighs what we do and it is a proud honor to carry your colors on the side of the race car."

"If you have ever met Jerrod, you know he deserves the title of 'hometown hero'," said Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general. "Despite what he's gone through, he has a positive attitude that is an inspiration to all his fellow Soldiers."

"I think I speak for all the Soldiers and Airmen of the Kansas National Guard, that this is a job, and it's a job that we actually love doing," said Hays. "Some people might think that's a little strange that we love what we do, but it's an honor to put the uniform and represent the great state of Kansas."

"We both felt like, he just went and did his job, and to have him back here with us, is just about all we could have asked for," said Nancy Hays.

Battalion hosts Truck Rodeo

By Sgt. Patricia Roath, UPAR
HHD, 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

On April 4, 2009, the 169th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion conducted a "truck rodeo" for its three subordinate transportation companies. The 137th Transportation Company, 778th Transportation Company and the 731st Medium Truck Company each had four teams of drivers in the competition.

Military and civilian trucking companies regularly hold these events as a fun way to test truck driving expertise. "This might be the first year that these companies have competed against each other to establish bragging rights," said Lt. Col. Thomas Foster, 169th CSSB commander.

The event itself was organized and supported by the 731st Transportation Company. Sgt. 1st Class Mike McClure worked with each first sergeant and truckmaster to norm the events and scoring. "Since I train truck drivers for a living, I have put on many truck rodeo competitions. But, this is the first multiple company truck rodeo I have ever seen in the Kansas Army National Guard," McClure noted.

The competition consisted of six different events. This allows Soldiers to show off their skills in the area of truck driving. Before the competition took place, these Soldiers were given a written test. The events and test were meant as a challenge to each driver.

The winner of this competition was the 778th Transportation Company. Each company also awarded first and second place to their highest teams. The winners were:

The First place Battalion winner was the 778th Transportation Company.

"This might be the first year that these companies have competed against each other to establish bragging rights."
Lt. Col. Thomas Foster
commander, 169th CSSB

First place team - Sgt. Michael Carr and Sgt. Edward Bondurant.

Second place team - Sgt. Robert Hall and Staff Sgt. James Bloodworth.

The second place battalion winner was the 137th Transportation Company.

First place team - Staff Sgt. Mark Goforth and Sgt. Jacob MacDougall.

Second place team - Sgt. Nathan Coker and Spc. Kevin Hahn.

The third place battalion winner was the 713st Maintenance Company.

First place team - Sgt. Brandon Tippy and Spc. John Blea.

Second place team - Staff Sgt. Marlin Hogie and Sgt. William Warner.

The executives of Yellow Roadway Corporation and TransAm trucking companies were on hand to witness the skills of these Soldiers. These executives got an up close and personal look at the vehicles. 1st Sgt. Paul Jackson, with the 778th, commented, "Truck Rodeo was a huge benefit to the ESGR program because it allowed my supervisors to actually put hands on the actual equipment that their Soldiers use in the Guard. It gave my employer the chance to talk to some of my Soldiers and get their opinions of what type of Soldier I am, so they can compare that to the type of worker that I am with their company."

Council Grove Soldiers support "Relay For Life" fundraiser

By Sgt. Charles Malloy, UPAR

Council Grove, Kan., has a long tradition of hosting the American Cancer Society's "Relay For Life." This event has taken place in Council Grove for the past 15 years with the assistance of the Kansas Army National Guard.

Held at the Council Grove high school track each year, this event is held annually to help raise money for cancer research. This year alone, they raised over \$50,000. The track is lined with "luminaries," small paper bags with the names of Morris County residents battling cancer. This year there were more than 2,300 of them.

Diane Bolton, co-chair of the event, said "We are proud and grateful for all the

Guards' help, from putting up tents that provide shelter for cancer survivors if the weather turns, to providing security details."

Staff Sgt. John Peterson, has assisted in this event for the past three years.

"It's an uplifting sight to see so many people fighting this deadly disease," said Peterson, "and the number of people that come out to support them. It's inspiring."

Peterson's family is also affected by cancer. Petersons' daughter is friends with a young woman who suffers from cancer.

Staff Sgt. Eric Dengler said that the Guard will continue to offer whatever support is needed until the need and the disease no longer exists.



(Right to left) Sgt. Jonathan Stranberg, Staff Sgt. Henry Womack, Spc. Andrew Weber, Staff Sgt. John Peterson and Staff Sgt. Michelle Baker erect a tent for use during the annual "Relay for Life" event in Council Grove. (Photo by Sgt. Charles Malloy, UPAR)